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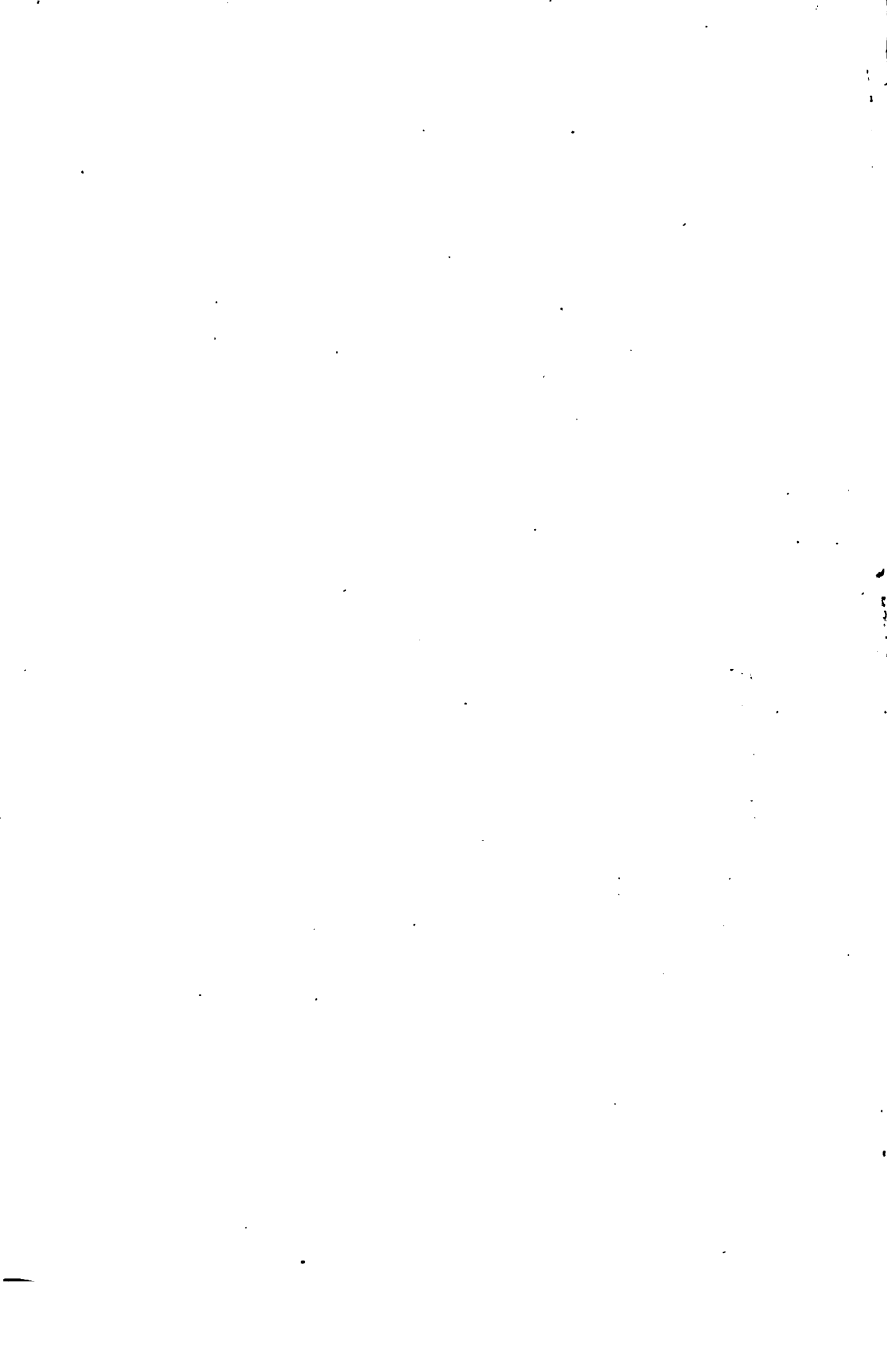
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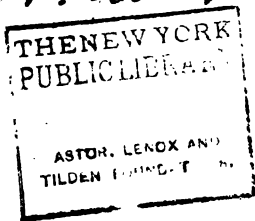


SM

(Gillmore)
MYPR



Robert M. Newton
to A. M. Hardy.





A GALE IN TANGIER SOUND.

ADVENTURES AFLOAT AND ASHORE.

BY

PARKER GILLMORE
("UBIQUE").

AUTHOR OF "PRAIRIE FARMS AND PRAIRIE FOLK," ETC.



LIGHTHOUSE IN HOOPER STRAITS.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

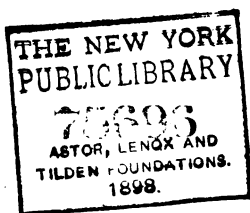
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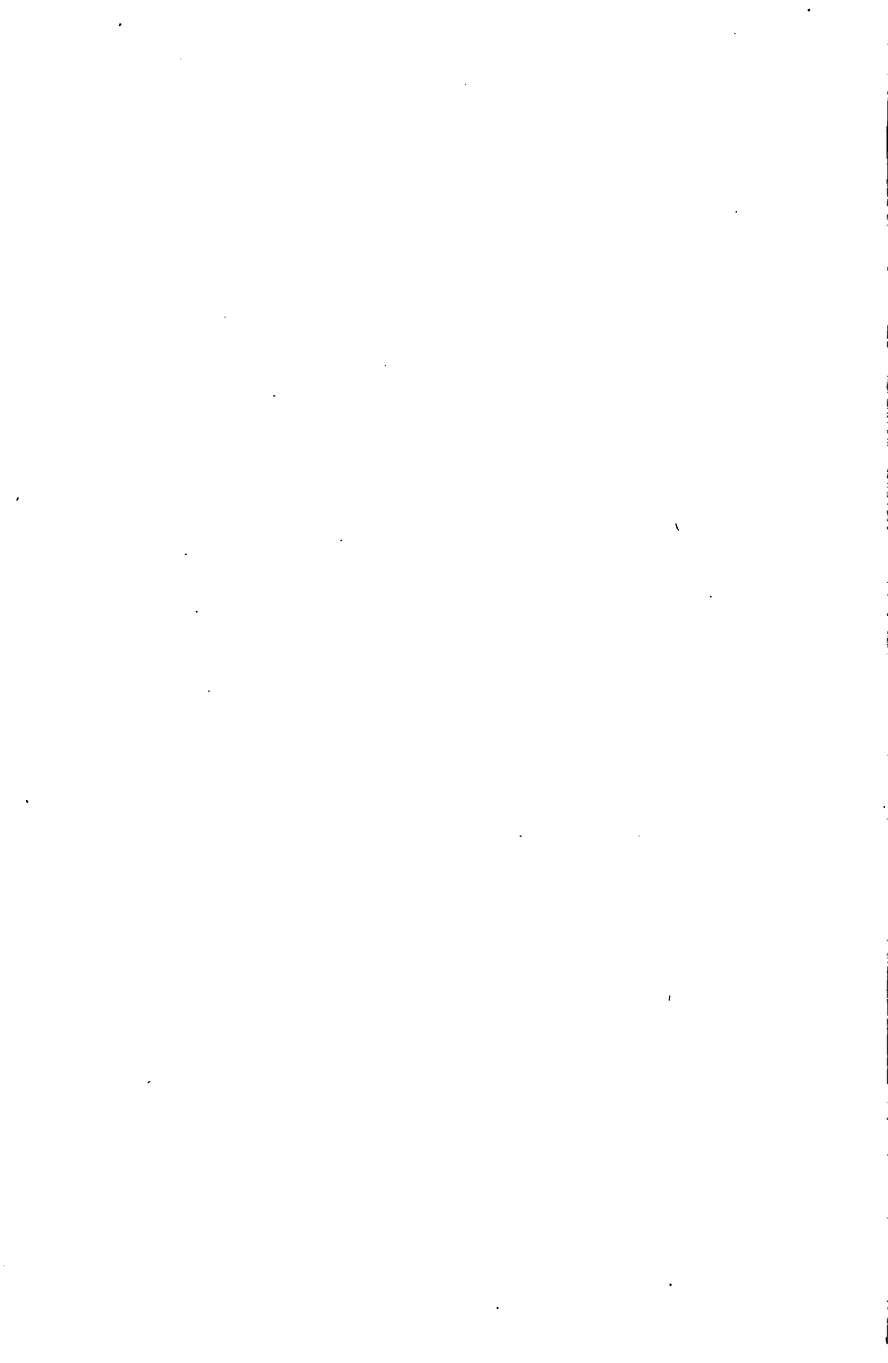
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CHAPTER I.

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ADVENTURES AFLOAT AND ASHORE.

CHAPTER I.

THE weather being unusually favourable, and the roads much improved, I determined to pay a visit to a most hospitable person, whose acquaintance I had lately made, and who had insisted on seeing me at his house before I left the neighbourhood. The distance was nearly thirty miles ; so, not to distress the staunch little pony I rode, which, for its size, was a marvel of strength and endurance, I started early. Leaving Devil's Island, I took my course across the trestle-work bridge that connects the main land with the place named after his Satanic Majesty, then proceeded along the edge of the creek, passing through a pine wood, and across a large

marsh, such scenery repeating itself throughout the Dame's Quarter.

Beyond its margin was the nearest public-house—for the sale of spirits is, as I have said, strictly interdicted in Dame's Quarter, and on Devil's Island, a prohibition that cannot be too highly praised, when we consider the excitable nature of the people, and their proneness to use arms if annoyed. As soon, however, as the limits of these two localities were reached, we found a roaring trade in the worst description of spirits going on. In fact, it is a common expression here to say that whisky is warranted to kill as far as a six-shooter. This fearful grog-shop is established in a rough cabin, constructed in the most primitive manner. Murder and violence are said to have been frequently committed within its walls. The very pine that stretches a giant limb, as if to screen from the passer's gaze this hateful haunt, has witnessed the death of a murdered man.

It was morning when I rode by, and even at that early hour there was a host of niggers and low white men lounging about, many of whom

were already intoxicated. One lusty wretch was yelling, at the top of his voice, a ribald song, while he staggered to and fro in his endeavours to stand upright. Shaking up my little nag, I hurried on past this horrid scene of debauch; but when I had left it quite a mile behind I overtook two youths, whose combined years appeared little to exceed thirty, staggering along arm-in-arm, with all the evidences in their faces and clothing that they had spent the night in rioting and debauchery.

For several miles little change takes place in the appearance of the country, swamp and pine barrens being the predominant characteristics. A diminutive piece of cultivated ground is occasionally found, and then only in the immediate vicinity of dwellings. Travelling through such a country would sicken the agriculturist who glories in luxuriant meadows and pastures, or heavy, waving wheat, and luxuriant Indian corn-fields; but fortunately we are not all of the same tastes or proclivities, for in each clump of cat-tail reeds I could imagine marking down a covey of partridges, in each piece of swamp-land flush-

ing innumerable snipe, and on the edge of the barrens filling my bag with woodcock. But the country is exactly what it looks, the haunt of inconceivable quantities of game, rarely, very rarely indeed, disturbed by the sportsman. Nor have I enumerated all the varieties that are to be found, for the timid, diminutive American hare lurks wherever it can find shelter, and the large black-duck and wood-duck are found wherever the country is intersected with water-courses, which are so numerous that, in order to go a mile, I have frequently required to traverse four times that distance, because my course was constantly intercepted by these channels, just too wide to jump, and too deep to wade. No person, therefore, should think of coming here to shoot who does not possess a dog that will retrieve both by land and water; in fact, such an animal is indispensable in Maryland, to all those who desire to practise field-sports successfully.

As the capital of Somerset county is approached, human habitations become much more numerous, and cultivated ground the rule, not

the exception; but it is poor, low-lying, and cold soil, so that the produce seldom approaches in yield what would be deemed less than an average crop in the Western States. Some fruits, however, grow well here—such as grapes, peaches, melons, and cucumbers; but the abundance of these does not compensate for a deficiency in the more useful and valuable cereals.

At length Princess Anne is reached, a place varying in few respects from other towns of the State; for here are the wide long streets, running parallel to each other, intersected by others crossing at right angles. The houses have the same pretty, bright look, with long verandahs surrounding them, striking the stranger as much more suited for Summer residences than for Winter ones. Each of these tenements is enclosed by a garden and orchard, separated from the public thoroughfare by neat painted railings, generally kept in good repair. The streets, which in wet weather are all mud, require, in times of protracted drowth and dust, a great deal more attention than is bestowed upon them; still they look pretty,

from the fine regular shade-trees that margin the side-walks. Here, also, is to be found the tall, thin, long-handled, ubiquitous pump. The village tavern—hotbed of politicians, indicated by its brilliantly-coloured sign-board, creaking under the influence of every breath of wind—and the long water-troughs of clear spring-water, ever at the service of all thirsty, dust-stained, foot-weary beasts of burden that happened to pass that way. Chapels and school-houses are also in fair proportion, the appearance of which indicates their use, for it has always struck me that in the county towns throughout the United States they have one stereotyped pattern, any departure from which would be considered an innovation.

Giving my little nag a few minutes rest, and a few mouthfuls of corn, I dropped into a tavern, to gratify my curiosity with a sight of its frequenters, and to take a drink. Being market-day, I found assembled within its precincts a great number of persons, who, doubtless, were from the surrounding farms. A few discussed the crops, the price of provisions, the

quality of certain horses, or the value of stock ; but these were the minority. Politics here, as everywhere else, appeared the popular subject of conversation, and a gaping crowd was listening to a nervous, bad-tempered, sour-faced-looking person, covered with an immense assortment of very Brummagem-looking jewelry, who was running through a collection of those expressions which are favourites on such occasions—such as States-rights, Republican principles, bloated demagogues, shoddy contracts, and glorious institutions ; but how he made them bear his constant iterations on the same subject, or what, indeed, was the pith of his discourse, I for the life of me could not comprehend. One thing, however, was noticeable here. Neither my arrival nor my departure excited the slightest evidence of curiosity, although I was unknown to all, and my apparel proclaimed me a foreigner. How different this from the conduct of the village politicians of New England ! There, in ten minutes after my arrival, I should have been valued to a nicety, and so many questions would have been

asked concerning my birthplace, lineage, and business, which, if I had replied to them, would have given to the inquirers a pretty good synopsis of my life, from the day of my birth to the hour in which I became exposed to their inquisitorial cross-examination.

One thing that struck me about Princess Anne, as I left the town in continuance of my journey, was that there was an air of antiquity and repose about it seldom seen in America, and that the population was apparently divided into three distinct classes—namely, those comfortably off, those that laboured for their daily subsistence, and the niggers; and of the latter I must say that they looked more comfortable and better cared-for than in any place in which I had lately seen them. This doubtless resulted from the circumstance that Princess Anne was situated inland, with little or no external traffic to induce strangers to visit it. Thus those elements of strife which in other parts of the county have raised bad feeling, leading frequently to complete separation between the master and his dependents, having

been denied the right of entrance here, have had no opportunity of extending their evil influences among the population.

Although I had already come twenty miles, I had ten more to go ; and although I cannot now-a-days ride one ounce under thirteen stone and a half, and the little nag I bestrode barely reached fourteen hands, she was as fresh and anxious to push on as if she had just left the stable. But the ponies here are wonderfully tough and high-spirited. All of them that I saw, with the exception of the postman's, who twice a week brought the mails to Devil's Island, would have been regarded in England as extraordinary little creatures for their inches. If I am correctly informed, there is, however, a breed not quite so large as the race I have been speaking of, but heavier built, that are considered even more lasting, and of greater pecuniary value. They are designated beach-ponies, and are brought from the Island of Chincotique, a long, comparatively barren waste on the Atlantic sea-board, where they roam about in large herds, as wild and free as the

mustangs on the prairie wastes of Texas and Northern Mexico. At no remote date, I am informed that any person so disposed might have captured them; but such is no longer the case, for since their capacity for work, their high courage, and their great sureness of foot have become known, those desiring to possess one of these valuable diminutive horses must be prepared to pay liberally for them, or forego their possession.

Two beach-ponies which I saw in Baltimore reminded me very much of the admirable ponies which are found in Morocco, for the outline, topping, shape of head, and setting on of both, were identical. The limbs, however, were much larger, with a greater display of muscular development. Where these ponies came from originally, has been a subject of controversy, for as there is no race of horses indigenous to the American continent, it is highly improbable that an island upon its shores should have possessed them, and they must therefore be sprung from some foreign stock.

Some persons insist that the progenitors of

this island drove, having strayed away from their owners on the mainland, swum across to Chincotique, an opinion for which there appears to be some shade of ground, in the fact that all of the race swim like water-spaniels, and seem to enjoy a dip in the liquid element as much as the race of dogs mentioned. In opposition to this belief, I may remark that horses of all descriptions were, at the date of settling the county opposite this wild island, far too valuable to be permitted to regain their liberty.

Another story speaks of an immense Spanish galleon loaded with soldiers, who, with their steeds, were wrecked upon these inhospitable shores. This, it is true, is but a tradition of the aboriginal red man, handed down to the white possessors of his patrimonial estates; and few of the legends derived from such a source have any claim to our belief! Yet I am inclined sometimes almost to imagine that I can see the immense vessel, with the flag of Spain at its peak, or, more probably, a hull without stick or spar standing, drifting, helpless and uncontrollable, through the mountainous waves

in a fierce south-east Atlantic gale, till it strikes on some of the numerous surrounding shoals. One moment the craft is bedded in the skudding, snow-like spray, and in another its buoyancy helps it to rise to the surface of the boiling waters, to be dashed again upon the cruel and unfeeling reef with a shock by which it is severed into a thousand pieces; and then comes that struggle for life in which trooper and horse are actuated by the same impulse. But man fails where his four-footed companion succeeds; and the Spanish horses, in whose veins courses a large proportion of Moorish blood, become the inhabitants of an island whose shores never before echoed to the measured tread of an uncloven hoof, but are afterwards to be overrun with their descendants. As I acknowledge, fancy alone paints this picture; but it is possible that such an event might have occurred, even a greater semblance of possibility be given to it by the fact that this race of ponies is stamped with characteristic marks of the breed of south Spain.

“Uncle Abe,” I asked, addressing an old,

good-looking dorky, "where is Mr. —'s house?"

"Close by," answered the old fellow, grinning, as he continued, "You be the English gentleman master expected—he be terrible glad to see you. Last night's thaw bring plenty snipe; and there's a tolerable smart scattering of partridges and woodcocks. Come along, sir, I show you the way, for massa I know terrible glad to see you."

So the coloured man turned about, and walking by my side, volunteered for my information all the news of the neighbourhood; not forgetting to expatiate on the excellent qualities of his employer.

At length we reached the door, and I received that hearty welcome not exactly peculiar to these parts, but very nearly so, that makes you feel at home from the moment you cross the door-step. After drinking to each other's health and prosperity, we wandered over the homestead till dinner was ready. The grounds about the house were handsomely planted, and in good order. A splendid vine was carefully

trained around the verandah, which in Summer must have afforded a grateful shelter; while there was unmistakeable evidence that at the proper season a handsome array of flowers filled the deserted beds which lay on either side of the porch. The peach-orchard was seventy or eighty acres in extent, and just of such an age as predicted immensely prolific returns in favourable years. From there we went to the barn, stable, and cow-houses, all of which were well-filled with an excellent assortment of good, useful-looking stock. Lots of happy, grinning, woolly-headed darkies of both sexes, and of every age, were engaged in their various avocations, all dressed comfortably, and appearing healthy and clean. On inquiring how he retained so many, my host assured me that, with the exception of three or four worthless, lazy, incorrigible lads, he had not lost one of his hands by emancipation, and that they went about their work, lived in the same way, and enjoyed the same privileges as they had previous to the war. As we drew near the back-door out rushed a little boy, about three years of age, fat, chubby,

and rosy, as cherubs are usually painted, who, regardless of puddles, was only anxious to reach us. Immediately in his wake followed, in hot pursuit, a very old negro woman, dressed a little better than her fellows, her head bound up in the habitual brilliant-coloured cotton handkerchief; but she was not nimble enough to overtake the youngster, who with a bound sprang into my friend's arms, exclaiming, "Grandpapa!"

"Never mind, Aunt Chloe, I'll carry him in," said my host. Then, turning to me, he exclaimed, "This is my grandchild, and the old negress is his nurse. By-the-by, I must introduce you to her; she's quite a character."

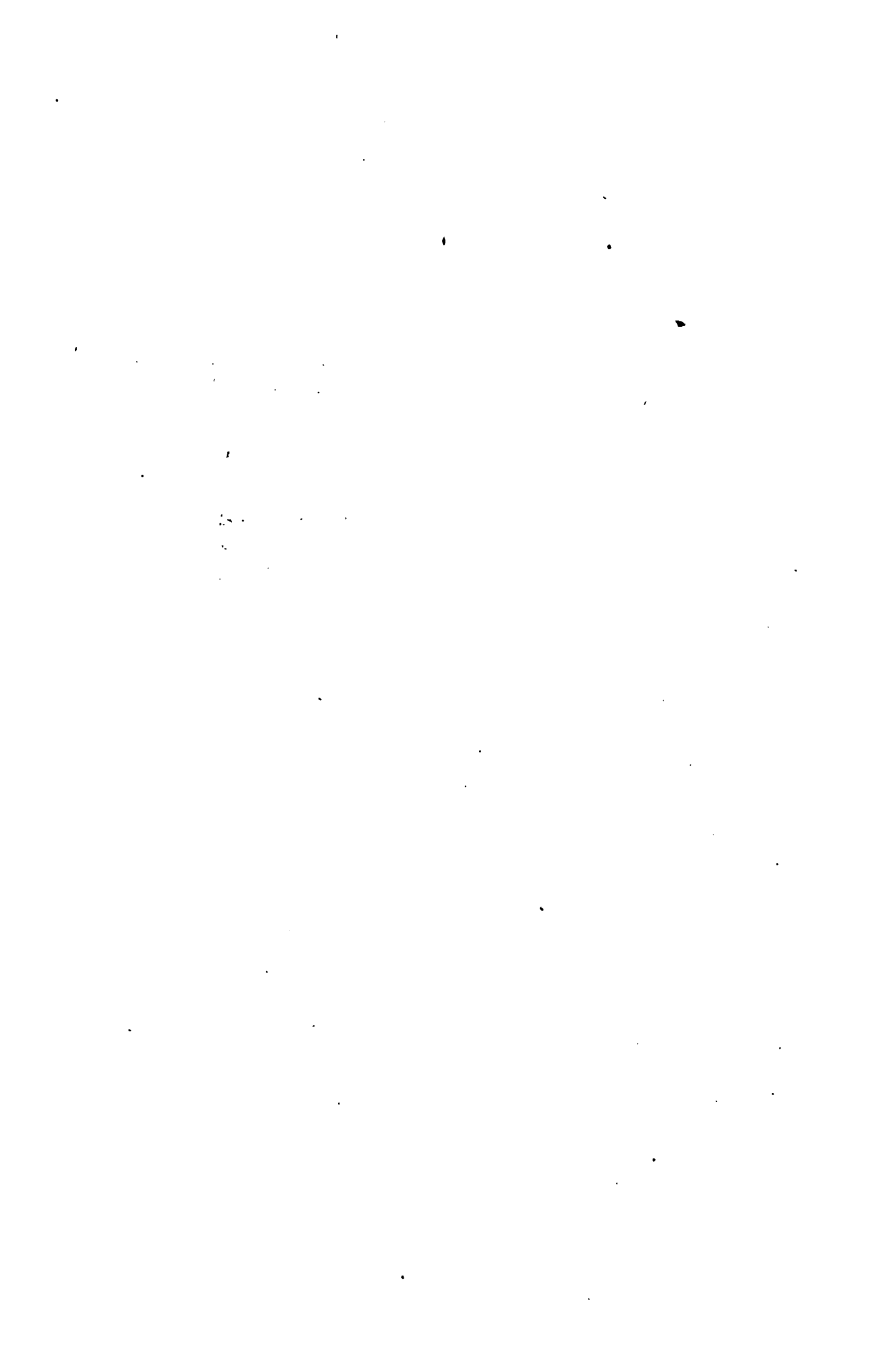
So Chloe advanced, on being summoned, and curtsayed. I remarked to her that she looked very well for her age; to which she responded that she had had a heap of trouble in her time. She had nursed the master there, and all his children, and now was performing the same duty to his grandchildren. Each generation of them was the all-fattest, plaguiest lot a coloured woman ever had to do with.

“You see that young one—he’s bad. You saw the way he run away from me. Just look, now, see that face he make at me. Is that the way to treat his old aunty? Well, as I say, he’s bad. But the master there—yes, you may laugh, yes, that you may—was the worst of the whole lot. You know I speak true. What for you put gunpowder in my corn-cob pipe, and most blow my nose off when I go to smoke? What for you make the mule throw off Sam Smith’s son, and most break his neck? And now you encourage that child, and make him bad as yourself!”

At length, her charge being delivered to her, she departed hurriedly, as she said that the little darling piece of sugar-candy must have its socks changed, as it had got its tidy-widdy little feety-peety damp. Poor old faithful soul, to have severed her from the family of whom she had nursed three generations would have simply broken her heart.

CHAPTER II.

A PLEASANT EVENING—EDIBLE QUALITIES OF THE MUSK-RAT—
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THE PAMPAS—A NIGHT OF CATERWAULING—END OF A
NOVEL SPECULATION.



CHAPTER II.

OUR intended excursion after game was postponed *sine die*, as rain began to descend in torrents immediately after dinner. However, time did not hang heavily on our hands, as we had lots of subjects of conversation, interesting to both of us. In the evening a couple of young ladies—companions of my host's married daughter—dropped in, and we had an abundance of excellent music, both vocal and instrumental, followed by a round game of cards, in which the young people were such proficient as to win all the counters.

I must not proceed further without stating that these young ladies were very nice-look-

ing—one, in fact, would have been considered a beauty in any society. They were sprightly and agreeable in conversation, very well-informed, and, although their dress was plain, they were attired in admirable taste. But bedtime at length arrived, and a last pipe and *doh-in-dorish* having closed the evening, I went to rest, and slept till breakfast was announced next morning.

That meal, as is always the case in this country, is a far more sumptuous affair than in England, partaking more of the French peculiarities than of those of the mother country. One dish—the name of which I did not know, but believing it to be hare, I asked no questions—I enjoyed exceedingly, for it possessed a rich gamy flavour, so delicate and grateful to the palate that it recalled to my memory the incomparable canvas-back duck, though, from its anatomical formation, I felt convinced that it was not a biped. To my surprise I was told, after breakfast, that it was musk-rat. Some visitors might have been indignant at such food being tendered to them, but I had no ex-

cuse for feeling irate against my host, as, on our first meeting, I had told him that I had heard they were excellent, and would not object to making a trial of their edible qualities, if I were allowed to remain in ignorance of what I was eating until I had finished my meal—an experiment I should not object now to repeat.

This clean, pretty little animal is very abundant in this part of the country, and is hunted for its skin, which is valuable, and for its flesh, which is worthily deemed a delicacy. As it feeds upon the *valisineria aquatica*, the same plant that is so eagerly sought for by the canvas-back duck, and red-head duck, the similarity of flavour between the two when cooked is easily accounted for.

Soon after our meal was finished, four or five of the neighbours rode up to the hall-door, with about twelve couple of good serviceable harrier-hounds at their heels. They had heard of an Englishman's arrival in their neighbourhood, and being under the impression that fox-hunting was the life, soul, and food of all my fellow-countrymen, had kindly made an off-day, to

give me an opportunity of enjoying sport with their pack. For this I was unprepared, being unprovided with riding toggeries, and having, moreover, a great objection to take the field without being able to do at least fair credit to myself. So I declined their kind offer, on grounds which I hoped would be sufficient to set the matter at once at rest, viz., that the horse I had ridden across from Devil's Island was unsuited for the purpose; and even supposing he were not, that, being borrowed, I would not so far impose upon the kindness of the lender as, without his knowledge, to use his nag for such a purpose. As luck would have it, however, I had stumbled on the very worst excuse I could urge, for in a moment my host, assenting to what I had stated, remarked, "Of course not," but immediately added, "I have got a mount for you, that I think, when you see it, you will pronounce up to your weight, and good enough looking for any purpose."

A further argument here arose between my friends, each of whom wished to send for a

horse for me, and two actually did so ; so that when I went out, half an hour afterwards, I found that I was expected to take my choice of three horses, which were being led up and down. Not to influence my selection, I was kept in ignorance who were their owners, and I could observe an air of curiosity on the features of each of my companions, all eagerness to see which animal I would select. Making a choice under such circumstances might be deemed a trifling affair by the majority of persons, but not so with me, for I well knew that my reputation as a judge of horse-flesh depended upon it. In a few minutes I decided upon a powerful chestnut mare, with every indication of her ability both to go and last, the only objection to be urged against her being certain signs of temper, and some blemishes, certainly not suggesting unsoundness, but plainly revealing that she had had plenty of hard work, and knew what it was to be knocked about. The mount I had chosen, however, pleased all, and particularly the owner, who vouchsafed me the information that, if I could only keep my seat, and hold her, I need

never fear the pack getting away from me.

An easy trot of a mile brought us to a cover in which the hounds had not been more than five minutes when a splendid fox broke within a hundred yards of where we were standing, and headed for the best range of country in the neighbourhood, as one of the sportsmen informed me, while he dashed after the tail of the hunt, smashing a post and rail-fence to pieces immediately afterwards, and so clearing a nice gap for me through my first jump. Whether my hands suited the chestnut's mouth, or in our short acquaintance I had established a supremacy over her, which she instinctively felt forbade all attempts to dispute the mastership, I know not, but I never was better carried, nor do I think I ever got over larger timber fences. At the commencement I picked out the rider whom I considered the best man, and giving him ample room, followed in his wake. For twenty minutes the pace was very sharp, and then we had a short fault, but a couple of casts again found the trail, and after ten minutes more of good galloping, at length succeeded,

after again losing pug for a few minutes, in running into him—not a moment too soon, for a hundred yards more would have gained him the shelter of a swamp, out of which it would have been impossible to dislodge him.

I did not make an effort for the lead, nor will I presume so far as to say I could have obtained it if I had. I simply endeavoured to retain a respectable place, and this I succeeded in doing, for the leader whom I had chosen for my guide was first up, myself and another neck and neck a few seconds behind, the field nowhere.

I had intended returning home that night, but being a good deal fatigued, I postponed my departure till the morrow. All dined together that evening, and over our cups, which were numerous, it was acknowledged that, if I was a sample of English fox-hunters, there was no mistake about it, they could ride; the horse-men of the old country had the true girt, and no mistake. It is pleasant to be made the hero of the hour, and as, thanks to my nag, I had fairly acquitted myself, I felt privileged to speak

of horses and hounds, believing that I would be listened to. So I discoursed of Melton and its broad pastures, noble packs, and large assemblies in scarlet; of runs at Gibraltar, where we seldom killed; of a long and quick thing over the grass-lands at the back of Tangiers, where a jackal, and not a fox, was the quarry. Fox-hunting, in fact, was voted the prince of sports, and the man who rode straight to hounds the prince of good fellows. The amount of wine I had imbibed had its effects, for I do not believe I turned on my bed from the time I laid my head upon the pillow till I rose to commence the duties of another day.

Shall I ever ride to hounds in Maryland again? Shall I ever meet the noble companions of that day? Possibly not; but I shall ever remember their genuine hospitality, their excellent companionship, and their courteous attention.

I left mine host with regret, for with all his persuasion I could not name a date on which I would return. They all bore me company to Princess Anne, and when we drank our *doch-in-*

dorish, I wished fervently that I could see them the guests of some wealthier man than myself by an English cover-side, with one of our crack packs before them; for well I knew that such an event would be marked in the calendar of their memory with a red letter; while I have no doubt that, by their plucky, straight riding, they would do credit to the land of their birth.

My little nag carried me home at a splendid pace, for I accomplished the twenty miles in three hours, and even at that rate I had to restrain the high-spirited little pet, so anxious was she to transport me to my destination in the shortest imaginable space of time.

On my arrival I found a letter from home awaiting me. It was addressed, as I had directed, to Devil's Island—for such is the name I found upon the map, when first I sought the place out, although I had already noticed that the inhabitants always called it De'il's Island. Now as "de'il" is the abbreviation in cannie Scotland for his Satanic Majesty, I thought that the good folks here preferred the abbreviation to the longer word, and

consequently used it. In this, however, I was wrong; for as a lady—one of the *élite*—informed me, the mere fact of giving strangers such an address at which to write to me, was sufficient to take away the reputation of the inhabitants for respectability. All the attempts I made to argue with her on the injustice of her conclusion were of no avail, even although I assured her that in Scotland the devil was called *de'il*, for she turned sharply on me, and asked what were a lot of ignorant savages, among whom the men wore petticoats instead of pants, to know about the proper way of speaking the American language. For her part, she had heard of a deal board, and a deal of money, and a deal of other things; but though she had seen and heard as much as most of her neighbours, she had never yet heard of Old Scratch being called the *De'il*.

Seeing that the land of cakes was not appreciated as it should be, and did not occupy the position which I think it deserved, I did not allow the subject to drop, but assured the worthy lady that, although a portion of the Scotch

wore kilts, they were nothing like Indians, neither daubing themselves over with red paint, nor living in wigwams, nor being the possessors of numerous squaws. Here, however, I was interrupted by the remark—

“There’s no need trying to cram me. When the Britishers were here (about 1812), hadn’t they a lot of them Highland Indians with them?—for so I’ve heard my dad say, and they had feathers in their heads, skin aprons in front, and scalping-knives as long as swords.”

Seeing how erroneous these impressions were, I attempted to put an end to further mistakes by stating that I was a Highlander myself; but I was mistaken in the result, for the good dame, flouncing about the room, and using her sweeping-brush with more than usual vigour, retaliated with the observation that she had long suspected something of the kind, for a man who would go fowl-hunting day after day, when he had no need to do it, or get into a tub of cold water, sometimes with ice in it, every morning, even when snow was on the ground, could only have been expected to be reared in a wigwam,

with a squaw for a mother, and a half-clothed warrior for a father. With this remark, bang went the door, and my tormentor vanished, accomplishing her retreat with flying colours and the honours of victory.

A certain captain of a pungey, when disengaged, often accompanied me shooting. One day we extended our journey far up the bay, and in the distance I noticed an island, which I had not previously remarked.

“What island is that?” I asked, pointing it out, for it was thickly covered with trees, and apparently much larger than those we had previously passed.

“Cat Island,” he replied.

“Why cat?” asked I.

“Well, I’ll just tell you,” he said; “and what I’m going to say is Gospel truth——”

It would be impossible for me to tell this story in the words in which I heard it; and by not doing so, much of the ludicrous in it must be lost; yet it is certainly too good a tale to be confined solely to the eastern shores of Maryland; and as I believe, from inquiry, that it is,

as my informant said, "Gospel truth," the greater is the reason that the world should know it.

In Baltimore, or its vicinity, lived a wealthy, self-made man of the name of Carroll. Like many another who had risen to opulence through his own exertions, he was a great speculator, incessantly starting some new idea by which unlimited numbers of dollars were to be coined. Furs were at that time very fashionable for the decoration of ladies' dresses, and even for their complete attire, and something like the seal-skin epidemic had attacked Baltimore and its vicinity. As is common in such circumstances, the increased demand raised the prices to such an extent that poor paterfamilias was obliged to open his purse very liberally, in order to obtain this fashionable article of apparel for the ladies of his family, if he wished to continue a darling old papa, or dear, good-tempered old hubby.

Shrewd Mr. Carroll was not slow to see that this mania for furs might be turned to good account, if he could only introduce into the

market, at a diminished price, an article equally attractive to musk, otter, and sable hides. For weeks, doubtless, he brooded over this problem, possibly burning the midnight oil while he pondered over the means of procuring some substitute for the furs which were so popular.

At length one evening, while he was resting after the toils of the day, a brilliant thought struck him, suggested by the sight of his faithful tabby stretched upon the hearthrug, luxuriating in front of the cheerful sea-coal fire. Cats, he thought, were the animals for his purpose, if he could only obtain them in sufficient numbers; and if their colours did not always suit the popular taste, they might be dyed all hues of the rainbow.

Mr. Carroll, having an abundance of money at his command, determined to carry out his new enterprise on a large scale, and at one time had even the idea of purchasing a track of land, and enclosing it with a gigantic fence, within which pussy should confine her rambles. A little afterthought, however, reminded him of the erratic habits of these midnight wanderers,

and in the perplexity into which he was thrown, by the consciousness of his inability to prevent them straying, a brilliant thought struck him. "An island is what I want!" he exclaimed. "Cats will not wet their feet, so that when once deposited on such a place, they are bound to remain, unless removed by human aid. Thus "Cat Island" was purchased, and the country far and wide ransacked for animals with which to stock it. But the supply coming in very slowly, an attractive advertisement at length made its appearance in the daily papers, offering to the public good prices for all cats, varying in proportion to their age and colour, black being considered the most valuable.

Like a cautious man of business, the author of this brilliant speculation kept secret his intention in reference to his purchases. The fact even of his having become owner of the island was, through the cautious means he adopted, known only to himself and the vendor. At the silent hours of night, cats of every size, shape, and colour were stealthily embarked for Cat Island, and ere long its feline population

increased to such an extent that it became imperative to adopt some means for supplying the imported inhabitants with food, for, before their ravenous appetites, all the partridges, hares, and small birds had soon disappeared. Report even goes so far as to say that pussy had the bad taste and worse conduct to turn on several occasions cannibal. However, Mr. Carroll was equal to the emergency. Fish abounding in all the neighbouring waters, several reliable persons were engaged to sein the shores daily, and scatter upon its beach the proceeds of their labour. By this means the commissariat was well supplied, and the speculator began to feel that he was justified in entertaining hopes of probable success.

One thing however, was remarked, that however tame grimalkin had been before his transportation to his island home, he became, from the moment when he was landed upon its shores, possibly from the force of example, as wild as the untamed denizens of the primæval forest.

Although, even at the present time, the neighbouring main land is but sparsely settled, it

was, at the date of which I write, much less so, the reason, doubtless, that this wonderful speculation remained a secret from the public. The island, however, got a bad name, and fearful stories were circulated far and near, to the effect that the devil was in the habit of visiting it nightly, and, with his imps, holding orgies and revels of such a demoniacal character, that the neighbouring waters resounded with their shrieks and unearthly wailings. Thus the fishermen and coasters gave its shores a wide berth on their voyages up and down the bay, while the two or three men who were occasionally seen upon its shores were pronounced to be in league with the Evil One; for although they were known to fish, it was said they never came to market with the produce of their labour, whence it was concluded that they sold what they caught to Old Nick and his myrmidons.

At the termination of Autumn, in the second year after the organization of the speculation, a season at which furs of all descriptions are supposed to be in their prime, a day was fixed for the slaughter of the innocents. "But man pro-

poses, God disposes!" A frost unprecedented for its severity set in, and in a few days the bay was covered with ice, a circumstance which could not be paralleled in the memory of the oldest inhabitants. The ungrateful pussies, unmindful of past favours they had enjoyed, the food and home that had been provided for them, one and all decamped for the main land.

Great was the surprise of the settlers, whose land was situated nearest to Mr. Carroll's Island, to find, on the morrow, their woods swarming with domestic cats, all possessed of the ferocity of the wild race. The superstitious foretold that such an extraordinary event predicted the rapid approach of the end of the world; while the naturalists shook their heads, and looked knowing, but said nothing—the true way of making a reputation for the possession of wisdom. But puss was not long permitted to remain in peace, his predatory habits and insatiable appetite soon arousing innumerable enemies against him. How could it be otherwise, if it be true—and report asserts that it is—that poultry were carried off from under the good

house-women's noses, while calves and sheep were worried and devoured in their pens. Reports of these, and similar depredations, arriving from all quarters, the entire male population that could handle a gun, turned out *en masse*, and slaughtered or drove out of the country the unwelcome visitors.

Strange to say, although the injury done to the denizens of the farmyard was immense, and sufficient grounds might, with a little activity, have been easily obtained for commencing an action against Mr. Carroll for damages done, yet, although the Americans are, as a rule, the most litigious of people, a long time elapsed ere it was discovered whom they had to thank for this wonderful and alarming invasion of cats. Such an unexpected downfall to the project of our speculator would have damped the courage of the majority of men, but not that of the hero of our tale, who, on the breaking up of Winter, again set to work with undaunted resolution, and soon had cats sufficient to populate the island as thickly as before; and his perseverance was crowned with such success that he was

actually beginning to reap the first fruits of the golden harvest he had anticipated. But in an evil hour the speculator met an old acquaintance, who had just returned from South America. Having a high opinion of the business qualifications of this friend, he made a confidant of him, in the hope that he might be made acquainted with some means of improving the fur of these animals, both wild and domestic. Travellers are always supposed to know a great deal—in fact, are often credited with a superabundance of knowledge which they do not possess. The friend consulted had no special knowledge of the subject, yet to maintain his reputation as one who had knocked about in the world, and seen a great deal, he cudgelled his brains till at last he remembered that on the pampas there existed a wild cat, little larger than the domestic breed, which possessed a beautiful fur, and it struck him that by the introduction of this foreign race, which would probably breed with the domestic animals, two advantages might be gained—namely, greater size and a superior pelt.

The result of the old acquaintance's cogitations was communicated to his friend, who immediately felt satisfied that the importation of some of this foreign breed was all that was necessary for the perfecting of his scheme, so without further delay an order was given to a skipper in the South American trade, to bring back to Baltimore as many males of the pampas kind as could be procured. After the lapse of the many months necessary for so protracted a voyage, the welcome news was at length reported that the vessel which was to bring this superior species of the feline genus was in the lower part of the bay. A boat for a pull of fifteen or twenty miles was procured, and off started the redoubted speculator, who hoped to be able to supply the fur-market. On his arrival on board, he was delighted to find, in appropriate cages, eight or ten of the handsomest pussies he had ever set eyes on, all of which were that night transferred on board a suitable craft, and taken down to Cat Island, where they arrived safely, and were turned loose.

The caterwauling that night is reported to

have been the most appalling known on the island. So fearful was the row, that those inured persons who fished for the subsistence of the inhabitants of the island, could not close their eyes. If the ways of cats were at all like those of human beings, it might have been supposed that the old residents were giving the new-comers a serenade in honour of their arrival.

Day broke at length, however, and the sleepless fishermen, on going out to haul their nets, observed, to their surprise, the newly-imported cats chasing the others in the most energetic manner in every direction, but knowing that these were all males, and just disembarked after a lengthened voyage, they judged them by human nature, and gave them credit for being prompted solely by amatory feelings for their new acquaintances.

As the day advanced, however, they found out their mistake. The cats of the pampas, regarding those of the United States as the latter would have done rabbits and partridges, were, in spite of the adage, "Dog no eat dog, massa—

no, never," giving their unnatural appetite full licence, and devouring their Northern relatives wherever they could lay hold of them.

An attempt was at once made to destroy the newly-introduced stock by the aid of fire-arms, but this was found no easy matter, for in that state of freedom to which they had been restored, their natural stealth and cunning were in full activity, and all efforts for their destruction proved futile; the melancholy end of the drama being that all the unfortunate tabbies on Cat Island were devoured.

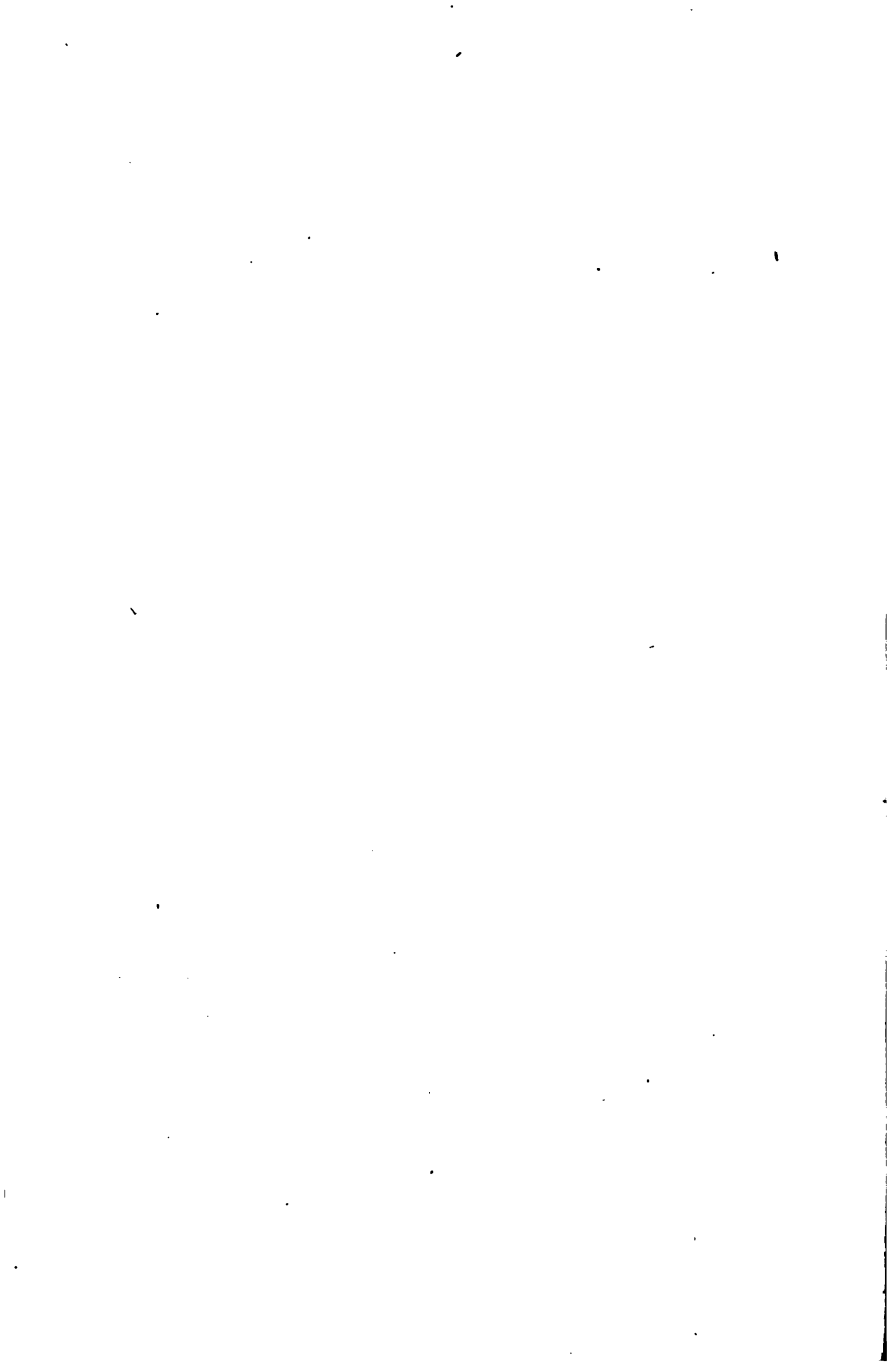
Thus ended this novel and brilliant speculation, for any error in the narration of which, although I do not think there are any, the reader must blame my informant, for if I have not used the same language, I have strictly endeavoured to give the purport of his words.

In conclusion, I will add that as I passed Cat Island I did not hear a single screech that called to mind the voice of our home tile-baladists, from which I came to the conclusion that the place that once knew pussy so well now knows him no more.



CHAPTER III.

AN EARLY MARRIAGE—BALLS AND PARTIES—COMMEMORATION
OF A SILVER WEDDING—SCIENCE OF KISSING—A BE-
WITCHED GLOBE—FAINT HEART NEVER WON FAIR LADY
—A KISS SPOILT—A GOOD LITTLE NAG—THE MIGRATION
OF BIRDS—WEATHER INDICATIONS—THE IVORY-BILLED
WOODPECKER—DIFFERENT METHODS OF TAPPING—A BAD
FORERUNNER TO A NIGHT'S FESTIVITIES—PROGRAMME OF
A FÊTE—STORY OF THE GRASS WIDOW'S COURTSHIP.



CHAPTER III.

THE little community has had its usual quiet slightly disturbed by a marriage among the inhabitants. Early marriages are common in the south of Europe, and only a little less so in the United States ; but this one beat all that have come under my notice for many a year. The bride was fourteen, the bridegroom barely sixteen, and both looked quite as childish as they might be expected to look at that age. I inquired how they had obtained the consent of their parents.

“Consent be d——d ! Who cares what a fellow’s father has to say agin marrying ? He ain’t by a long sight going to live with the gal.”

After such clenching arguments, further in-

vestigation on this point was useless. But how, it may be asked, will two such children live? I reply, by oystering. The husband will earn during the season ten to twelve pounds a week, and when Summer comes, grows as many melons, sweet potatoes, and other garden-stuffs as are required in the vegetable department; while the bay will always yield him a stock of fish.

When a youngster, I was so fond of balls and parties that on many occasions I travelled twenty or thirty miles to have a thorough night of dancing, possibly spiced with flirtation; but, alas! that arch-fiend, Time, who cannot be stopped in his steady advances, has laid his hand upon me, and I now regard it as useless to struggle against his inroads. In other words, I feel compelled to acknowledge that my dancing days are among the things of the past. Well, it is a pity; for what can be more delightful, at that period of life when the hot blood of youth courses through your veins, and the happiness of your future life appears as certain as the fineness of the coming day, predicted

by the golden clouds of the preceding evening? Youth and health are pleasant possessions, but how seldom are they valued by their owners as they ought to be! If an oldster could get rejuvenated—if the buck of fifty could be transformed into the young subaltern of twenty, the former, having had a glimpse of the downward path of life, would greet with inexpressible delight his return to the flower-strown paths of early manhood.

I cannot be so very *blasé*, however, myself, as not to enjoy a dance, for I have resolved to attend a grand party, to be given by a well-to-do farmer, in commemoration of his silver wedding; and though thirty miles of vile roads, or twice that distance of water and rail, sever me from the new barn in which the grand affair is to be held, I shall not fail to be present. Dress coats are not in favour in Eastern Maryland or Virginia; white kid gloves and patent leather boots their goodly inhabitants are equally indifferent to; so my presence among them in my travelling costume will not excite surprise. Thus, requiring little or no baggage, and as

there will be no bother about dressing, I have determined to go by the shorter route, selecting horseback as my mode of travel.

For days previous to this event, I endeavoured to find out from those who lived in the neighbourhood, and who were favoured with invitations, what would be the programme of the amusements. To all inquiries I received but one answer—"gum-sucking." As I have previously explained to the reader what this is, I will pass on without making further comment. I only hoped that the girls would be pretty, and that a day might ultimately come when, in this primitive region, the chaste salute, usually denominated a kiss, should be called by a more appropriate appellation than that which is here given to it. I once went into ecstasies over the name Sonora, and as a critic found grave fault with me for doing so, it is not without fear and trembling lest the lash may again scourge my shoulders that I express an opinion either of the inappropriateness or of the euphony of a word or phrase. I cannot, however, resist once more running the risk of censure when I

persist in saying that, if the English language had been hunted from end to end, tortured, twisted, or misapplied, a more unpoetical, unimaginative term could not have been found to designate what from time immemorial has been regarded in quite a reverse light.

Of course there are many kinds of kisses, their species changing with the appearance and character of the persons practised on. Thus there is the kiss on the forehead or on the cheek, which may be received or given by rich old aunts or uncles, or persons even of closer affinity. There is also the kiss which a brother would give his little sister, the pledge of a pure and holy affection. Then there is the kiss that is stolen, or bestowed when no strange eye is supposed to be within seeing distance, the memory of which is cherished, the value impossible to define.

Who has never kissed a pretty girl? There being many strange and unaccountable persons in the world, I should not be surprised if some individual came forward and said he had never been guilty of such an impropriety. To him I

would say, by way of warning, that he is certain to come to some unnatural end. I never was deemed a paragon of propriety, for the reason, I suppose, that I was not one; but I can remember one kiss which I obtained by the exercise of the greatest ingenuity, and which, when I purloined it, was surrendered so unresistingly, that the value of the commodity was greatly depreciated. It was in this way: I had reached about my twentieth year; my sketch-book was my constant companion. Near my father's residence was a grand old ruin, to which I frequently resorted, in order to discover fresh beauties, and to give fresh employment to my brush. One day, on my arrival at the place which in my opinion supplied the prettiest view of the grand old castellated mass of stonework, I found a lady seated upon the very spot I wished to occupy. The grass was so soft and velvety, that my advance was unheard, and I was almost at her elbow before she became aware of my presence. At length, however, she raised her eyes, some secret sympathy—animal magnetism, I suppose—telling her that a stranger was near, for I had not

spoken ; and they were such soft, languishing, liquid orbs as I had never looked into before. Her attraction was increased by her attire, which was in the most perfect taste, but the perfection of simplicity—a circumstance scarcely to be wondered at, when I state that she was a Quakeress. Again and again I met her. We both sketched, and, strange to say, we both selected exactly the same views, yet we never spoke to each other. If she had looked up, and caught my eyes, we should have commenced conversation at once—at least, if there was any power in the language they expressed ; but she didn't raise her eyes, and so we lost the opportunity. This young lady, although I was then quite ignorant of the fact, was at this time guest at a friend's house, and becoming, in course of time, acquainted with my sister, she became in turn our visitor.

Summer having given place to Autumn, and as we dined at the unfashionable hour of six, the light had so far waned, that the blaze from the large fire of the study was most acceptable, and when engaged in conversation, preferable

to the light of candles. Who is there that cannot remember waiting for the announcement of dinner by the ruddy, merry, flickering blaze of a wood fire? Thought and imagination are then more than usually active, for everything in the room seems to change its shape, and assume the most fantastic forms. In the room to which my memory travels there was a pair of globes—a circumstance in itself nothing marvellous, but as they stood almost hidden in obscurity, unless an unusually large blaze revealed them, they looked like creatures with very large heads and small bodies. Now one of these globes was supposed to be bewitched—at least, the servant maids said so, and to such good authority, all will doubtless agree that some credence was due; for it had been detected several times—by whom I cannot exactly say—spinning round for bare life, when there was no one in the room to cause it to do so. My parents, our guest, now some weeks an inmate of our house, and myself, were seated in the study, and conversation did not flow briskly; in fact, if I remember rightly, I was

then in the governor's black books. If we did not talk, however, I thought how I should like to steal a kiss from the pretty little Quakeress ! But that would be impossible, for there was no knowing what such a little prude might do under such circumstances. As a Quakeress, she had been brought up differently from any girl I had known previously, and there was no saying in what light she might regard kissing. Some girls would box my ears ; others might rouse the staid establishment from its lethargy by feminine screams ; but our pretty little Quakeress might go into hysterics, or, worse still, faint under the infliction.

At length dinner was announced. The paternal, with my mother on his arm, led the way, your humble servant, with our guest, bringing up the rear. In crossing the hall my companion remembered she had left a letter in the study, and disengaging her arm from mine, returned for it, I following her. The heads of the establishment had doubtless by this time reached the dining-room, and so were out of hearing. "Faint heart," &c., &c., I repeated to

myself with thorough conviction, as I stood at the door waiting for my companion, who was coming out of the room. As soon as she appeared, I clasped her with strong arms, as I expected a struggle. No, my Quakeress never moved. I kissed her, and she resisted not, but with the most Friendly composure said,

“Friend, thou mayst do it this time, but thou must not make a practice of it.”

That kiss was spoilt, for it was served up without the sauce of resistance, which ought always to accompany the first one stolen. This is a piece of advice which young ladies would do well to mark.

But to return to—let me see—that dreadful word gum-sucking, that is to be the chief amusement of the party I am going to, as it is, in fact, of all about here, so I fear the value of kisses must be sadly depreciated in this vicinity.

I have previously spoken of the gallant little nag owned by my landlord. He bore me on this journey as admirably as he had on others. Nothing particularly worthy of remark occurred, except that there was a visible increase in the

number of the turkey-buzzards, the departure of Winter, and the approach of fine weather, doubtless causing these birds to come further north.

The laws that control the migration of birds, or the instincts that prompt them, are but little understood by us poor crawlers upon earth. The majority of us are satisfied with the fact that it takes place, but why or wherefore we do not care to ask. In fact, indifference upon nearly every subject that is not actually connected with our wants and ailments is the characteristic of the majority of our race. Of course we all know that there are many men who devote a lifetime to study the laws of nature, and to unravel its mysteries; but these are numerically so few in number, that I feel certain that the explanation I am about to write will enlighten some one.

From practical observation, I believe that birds migrate, not from a desire for change of scene, but from force of circumstances, which actually compel them to take these lengthened journeys, that have been long the wonder

and mystery of non-thinking people. This is how I account for it:—A large portion of the feathered race are so formed by the Creator that a certain temperature is necessary for their comfort, if not for their existence. Thus those birds that spend their Summers in Arctic regions, being incapable of standing the severity of a Winter in such high latitudes, when the temperature falls so low as to cause them discomfort, fly, in order to escape from its influence, before the Northern blast that produces it. So when the temperature rises in their Winter homes to such an extent as to make them uncomfortable from heat, they proceed northward, before a southerly gale, in order to avoid the discomforts of a temperature too high for them, and they go so far north, or come so far south, because at those latitudes they obtain the change requisite.

Contrary to the statements of many students of Natural History, my belief is that all birds migrate before the wind; and the time of these periodical journeys is controlled by the earliness or lateness of the

season. Thus the sportsman in a foreign land in the Northern hemisphere, if in Spring he will note the change of weather, and on the day when a strong southerly breeze, especially if it be unaccompanied by rain, follows period of lower temperature, he will proceed to suitable feeding-places for snipe, he is certain to find that the long-billed gentry have arrived in full force. If, on the other hand, rain has accompanied the breeze, the feeding-places will, from the general saturation all over the country, have become more numerous; so that the game—for many birds will doubtless have arrived—is certain to be wild, scattered, and so not conducive to sport.

In Autumn, the weather indications must be the reverse—that is, a severe cold northerly blast following on the heels of mild, balmy weather, must be accepted as an indication of the arrival of the migratory visitors. In the Southern hemisphere, as the seasons are reversed, it is easily comprehended that the Spring line of conduct must be pursued in Autumn, and *vice versa*. Not only to snipe do these remarks

apply, but to nearly all waders, plovers, and wild-duck.

During the Winter some woodpeckers have remained in the neighbouring pine-woods, but the numbers of these are few—doubtless, stragglers, too lazy or too thoughtless to undergo the discomforts of a journey. To-day these lively little fellows I observe have had their ranks considerably swelled by arrivals from the South.

Among the different species, I observed that rare and handsome bird mentioned both by Audubon and Wilson—the ivory-billed woodpecker, which is almost as large as a pigeon, and of the most restless and active habits. The amount of insectiferous food which it destroys is enormous; for it never appears to rest in pursuit of its prey from the first flush of roseate morn till night draws her dark mantle of sable over the landscape. In fact, I believe it performs for its congeners in the American forests the same office which the milkman does for his in smoky, smudgy, grim London—viz., announces that it is time to get up. Although

it cannot quite be called a shy bird, still they are very cunning, so that when in your vicinity, and if your presence be known, they will take precious good care to keep the stem or limb of a tree between themselves and you, and come every few moments to peer over the bevelled surface to which they cling, to note that you are not going to steel a march on them, or to deceive them by any description of artifice that bodes them evil.

The various-species of woodpeckers have different methods of tapping, some giving three diffident pecks, like the timid, bashful child, when sent by its mother to borrow from a neighbour. The great spotted woodpecker gives two hammering blows, the likeness between which and the rat-tat of the London postman is increased by the energy of its manner. But the squalling, flirting, gay, and noisy little red-headed beauty beats a peal of raps on the hollow limb where he seeks his food. Is he, then, the autocrat of his genus—the Piccadilly *habitus* or club-house dawdler of woodpecker society?

It has long been imagined that these birds did injury to timber, but this is perfectly wrong, for a sound tree or limb they never bore or tap, nature not having armed them suitably for that purpose; nor if their inclinations should lead them to do so, would it be of benefit to themselves, for there they would not find food. Decayed, hollow, or spongy wood alone provides shelter and food for the insect life on which the woodpeckers live, and these active, beautiful birds diminish decay by devouring the promoters of it. They should therefore be protected and encouraged in every way.

But while listening to woodpeckers, and cat-birds, and the darling little American partridge singing his song of Bob White, my good little nag has been making use of his legs, and the time has passed so pleasantly that, on glancing ahead, I am astonished to perceive my destination, and on looking at my watch, I find that half an hour only remains before the sun goes down. But although the time was early for commencing a party, I was not the first arrival by long odds; for waggons, buggies, and sulkies

already filled the yard in graceful confusion, and small knots of the male sex were lounging about in cliques, all smoking, the staple of conversation among them being gunning and horse-flesh.

As by duty bound, I first paid my respects to the host, a visit which evidently was a little premature for the guests of the masculine gender; although, during the few words I had with him through a half-opened door, I found the interior was crowded with a whole bevy of petticoats, who rushed off, as if endeavouring to hide themselves from my gaze. Yet, strange to say, with all their dread of being seen, they could not help peeping round doors and angles to take a stare at the intruder. Thus I got a good look at one or two, and if the appearance of the whole company was to be judged by the specimens, the assemblage would be quite up to the average of female beauty anticipated.

My host said that I was to make myself comfortable, for the fun would not commence for an hour, but showed no inclination to let me into the house. How I was to perform his bidding,

with nothing but a stable and empty barn for shelter, was a problem that truly puzzled my brain. However, I determined to try, and lit a pipe, and joined one of the groups. They were polite, and in friendship asked me to have a "smile" (drink of whisky), and I "smole," as Artemus Ward says, and all did likewise, the demi-John in which the potent spirit was contained answering the double purpose of bottle and drinking-cup. But although my companions were very kind, that was a weary hour, and a bad forerunner to a night's festivities, for I was rather damp about the limbs, and certainly tired after my thirty miles' ride. However, as it was getting chilly, I went into the stable, secured a patent bucket, turned it upsidedown, made myself believe it was a most comfortable arm-chair, and tried to be jolly under adverse circumstances. In this I must have succeeded, for I occasionally "smiled."

In due time the empty barn was lit, and festivities commenced by the lady guests marshalling outside the host's residence, and marching in twos, the darling, sensitive, loving creatures,

with their arms entwined into each other's, to the future scene of our revelry. When I entered the bare, desolate, and badly-lighted apartment, how demure and prim they looked, each apparently endeavouring to occupy the smallest possible space, and to impress the observer, by the severity of her features, with the conviction that she was above all earthly pleasures. I tried to get into conversation, first with one, then with another, but the only response vouchsafed to my courteous attentions was a monosyllable. After a time I commenced actually to feel nervous, imagining that I must be very borish, or very uninteresting, and that the amenities of society, as practised in England, were out of date here.

The regrets caused by such a surmise were not, fortunately, of long duration, for the floor was cleared, and arrangements commenced for the opening performance of the fête. The first event in the programme was all joining hands, and forming a ring round a lady neither pretty nor young. When this was done she walked round the inside of the circle, to the music of

a dismal chant, then round the outside, and, as she passed a hulking big oysterman, the handkerchief which the heroine held in her hand was thrown across his shoulders. In a moment the lady was dashing in and out between the persons forming the ring, with the pursuer in close attendance. This exercise was severe and sustained, but ultimately terminated by the runaway being captured, when she was led by her pursuer into the middle of the ring, and kissed.

This manœuvre was repeated about a dozen times, only with this difference, that on each occasion the *dramatis personæ* were changed, and I was beginning to fear that I should be left out in the distribution of kisses, when a pretty, plump, laughing, saucy little puss threw the handkerchief at me. I got a very bad start, for before I was thoroughly off—long legs are rather in the way in an affair of this kind—my little tormentor was half round the ring, in and out of it at half a dozen places, through each of which I was bound to follow. Leaving out any selfish motives that I had in the matter, for the sake

of my national reputation I was determined to be successful, and it required much resolution to be so, for obstacles were ever occurring, from my superior size, while the little lassie seemed to fly between people, although the distance between them was so little that even a mouse would have been daunted in the attempt.

“Go it, English! Go it, Lizzy! Two to one on the Britisher! Done with you; or three to two on Liz!” resounded over the barn, till, pumped out myself, I ran the young lady to a stand-still. No ways loth, she was led into the ring and kissed, but I was too warm to enjoy it.

This boisterous game was played for an hour, and nothing more of very exciting interest occurred, if we except one occasion, when a stout, buxom grass-widow of thirty threw the handkerchief to a fat, podgy Aminadab Sleek kind of man, who was reported to be a high dignitary among one of the religious sects. With as much energy and determination of purpose as Bill Nye exhibited when going for “that heathen Chinees,” this smug, self-satisfied, rotund good

man went for the grass-widow. The pace of neither was anything to crack about, for be it remembered that both were welter weights, and aged, but they certainly were stayers. At length some profane fellow tripped up the pursuer, as he was making a rapid double, and the flop with which he came down was, as a person near me said, "a caution, and likely to damage the house property." Whether the barn suffered or not from the shake caused by such a concussion, I did not hear, but his pants did, "spick and span bran new ones," as he termed them, for when he rose they were found to be badly broken. Although he did not capture the lady, she in due form submitted to be kissed, doubtless to console him for his accident.

Another game played was not unlike the former. One of the young ladies took her seat on a chair in the centre of a ring formed by the other participants in the sport. Gentleman after gentleman came out and coquetted with her for a kiss, which was refused till the person she preferred made overtures, when she submitted coyly to his embrace; the gentleman

in turn taking the seat, till a lady he chose to kiss had come up and offered herself.

There is something truly refreshing in the simplicity and innocence of these primitive people, of which I saw a good illustration in the fact that they turned up their eyes with the true stamp of virtuous indignation when I proposed that we should have a dance, or a round game. The old proverb, "Too much of a good thing is more than enough," was here verified. This constant and indiscriminate kissing sadly depreciated the value of the commodity.

About eleven o'clock, pies, sweetmeats, and candies, with lemonade, were handed round. The girls took to the last kindly; but the men looked at it askance, and with suspicion. I can understand this when I remember how often, after each game, they stole out of the barn. Oh! I went too, and had "smiles" from sundry wicker-work-covered demi-johns which were hid away in the numerous and various conveyances.

I was told a short story relative to the early

history of the grass-widow (a married woman, whose husband was absent), and as I supposed it was narrated to me in a rather exaggerated form, I took an opportunity, when in conversation with her, to touch upon the subject; she evinced no unwillingness to its becoming the topic of conversation, and without pressure, confirmed all I had been told. I will attempt to give her story in a few words:—

At the age of twenty she was wooed by three lovers, all of them intimate friends, and, as she expressed it, “Between the three there was not a jack-straw for choice. Dick was pertest and sassiest; Ned had most money; but Josh—he was uncommon bashful, but great on the muscle. Well, for some time they all kept daudering after me, without the pluck to say ‘Come and be hitched;’ but one night at a frolic, the same as this may be, Ned come right to the point, and says,

“‘Sall, we’ll go to the judges in the morning, as we go home, and get hitched’ (married.)

“I told him I was game. But see what a pesky fool he was—he goes and tells Ned and

Joe all about it, and they promise to go with us, and see us put through. Well, just as we get to old Judge ——'s door, says Dick to Ned,

“ ‘Plague me if I can see what more right you have to that gal than myself.’ Then he turns to me, and says, ‘Sall, wouldn’t you sooner be hitched to me than him?’

“Well, you see, as I didn’t want to be mixed up in the matter, says I to them,

“ ‘Gentlemen, settle it atween you.’

“Well, Ned worn’t the best o’ pluck, so when Dick said he’d fight him for me, he backed down; and Dick and I were about going on to the Judge’s, when Joe spoke up, and says,

“ ‘I have a notion, Dick, that I like Sall there jist as much as you do. Now there’s no darn’t nonsense in what I say—before you’re hitched to that ’ere girl, you have jist got to peel and whip me, and that you don’t do that ’ere I’ll try my best.’

“Dick now appealed to me, but you see as they were neighbours, I couldn’t jist interfere, so I says,

“‘Settle it atween you.’

“Dick was no match for Joe in a rough and tumble fight, and he knew it; so Joe and I slipped into the Judge’s, and in a jiffey we were man and wife.”

Joe, however, was reported to have gone to California some years since, doubtless to make a fortune for his charming partner; although some malicious persons whispered to me that his shadow never would darken Maryland again.

There is a law in the United States which permits a woman deserted by her husband, even for a short period, to marry again; a fact of which the grass-widow appeared to be well aware. As she was departing, I thought a kiss in bidding adieu would not be out of place; but for my attempt I received a well-directed cuff on the side of the head.

“If you mean hitching, though you be a Britisher, and if you have a pretty fair pile, you can have all the gum-sucking you want; but narcy a bit till I get your written promise.”

As, tired and weary I pursued my course to Devil's Island, I could not help thinking that in this out-of-the-way quarter, in which there are so many queer people, this grass-widow was without a rival among my acquaintances for practically and rapidly closing a matrimonial arrangement.

CHAPTER IV.

A NECESSARY PRECAUTION—AN ARCHIPELAGO FOR SPORTSMEN
—UNEXPECTED APPEARANCE OF THE “WOOLFORD”—
PROSPECTS OF SPORT IN THE SOUND—HOOPEE’S STRAITS—
JEALOUSY AMONG SPORTSMEN—DECOYS—A CHANCE FOR
LIFE—A LAST TEMPTATION—A TERRIBLE NIGHT—A SEA-
WORTHY CRAFT—MY LANDLORD’S ADVENTURES—A FELLOW-
COUNTRYMAN.



CHAPTER IV.

I HAVE frequently had so many narrow escapes from having my head blown off, that I had formed an unalterable resolution not to go shooting with persons who possess guns that go off on half cock, or which have their locks tied on to the stock of their fowling-pieces by a shoemaker's waxed end. I have formed this determination from the least selfish motive in the world, for by adopting it, I am debarring myself of much sport I might enjoy; and as I am among strangers, who, if such an accident did occur, would doubtless, in the goodness of their hearts, honor me with a public funeral, and as such things cannot be done without costing the giver considerable expense, I have resolved to

run none of the risks I might incur of putting them to so much outlay.

The disinterestedness of my motives in thus acting may be easily perceived, for if accorded a grave in Devil's Island, the stone that marked my resting-place would doubtless for many years to come be regarded with considerable interest; while if I should return home, and either be run over by a cab, or carried off by some deadly disease caught in an omnibus, the probabilities are that whether laid among the illustrious dead in Westminster Abbey, by the side of Wellington and Dickens and Cowper, or obscurely buried in some village graveyard, where successive generations of hard-riding, hard-drinking country squires are interred, or even committed to dust in some such final resting-place as Woking, or other similar establishment, the last sod thrown upon my mortal remains would efface from the minds of my friends the recollection of my existence.

Still I yearned for those islands that rested so unobtrusively on the broad bosom of the Chesapeake, for I knew there was not an hour of

the day, or a stage of the tide, in which I could not obtain good sport, but I dared not run the risk of going there alone. In fact, had I chosen to do so, it would have been found impossible to procure upon Devil's Island a boat of such dimensions, as would be safe for a voyage so frequently perilous, which one person could handle.

In the morning, when the sun was an hour or two high, I was accustomed to look across from my dressing-room window, at the broad green surface of the numerous islets that composed this archipelago, and how I have wished that I could waft it away, with all its attractions, to some part of the earth solely my own; but, alas, we live in a very matter-of-fact age, and there are no longer any magicians, any genii of the lamp and ring, to effect such miracles for us. The wonders of romance are daily disappearing before the inroads of reality, which has its wonders also. My readers may very possibly ask a very natural question. Why did I not hire a man for the day, for the express purpose of waiting upon me and doing my bidding?

Such an individual was not to be obtained either for love or money, save among the most effete and indolent portion of the community; and somehow these appeared the most independent, and would no more have consented to be my companions, unless they also had been allowed to bring their guns with them, than they would have consented at my solicitation to give up chewing tobacco for the remainder of their days.

Thus time was beginning to hang a little heavy on my hands, when to my delight, while looking to the south-west over the wide expanse of water that stretched seaward, I observed a taunt-rigged cutter, with all her snow-white canvas set, creeping slowly but surely up to windward. In a moment I recognised the *Woolford*, and saw that, in an hour more, as the tide was in her favour, she would be either at anchor, or lying off Haine's Point. Although I may have eaten my breakfast more rapidly that morning than was my wont, I am convinced not only that I demolished more viands than usual, but also that they did me more good; for

with more than my usual activity and energy, I pulled on my waterproof boots, launched my little log canoe, and paddled off to learn the news. Although I had more than a mile to go, still by dipping the paddle deep and applying plenty of elbow-grease I soon accomplished the distance. One thing I noted on my way to the cutter, that the flocks of divers and small sea-ducks were far more tame than usual, and at the same time infinitely more clamorous. Well knowing what this indicated, I looked up to windward to note if there were any indications of a change in the weather, or of an approaching storm; but all was so peaceful and quiet, the breeze was so gentle and balmy, and the sun was so bright, a dying man would have regretted the fate which condemned him to quit so peaceful a scene. My kind friend, the good skipper, was at the gangway to assist me in reaching the deck, and he greeted me with the same sincere welcome which I always received on visiting him, while the smiles on the faces of his smart effective crew told me that they did not regard my presence without favour.

After a shake of the hand I asked the captain what were the prospects of sport across the sound, and whether he could spare time to go with me.

“Yes, I will go across; but I don’t like the look of the weather—the barometer is going down very fast. The atmosphere is too rarefied for this season, and the temperature too warm to be natural. Still, we can find shelter on that side, and it is all good holding ground; so we had better lose no time, for fear this breeze should die out. As you have to go back for your gun and ammunition, you take two of the boys in the gig, and I will push across under easy sail.”

Well, the stout lads made their oars bend like whips, and we flew through the water, some of the coots sitting on its surface, till we almost bumped them with our stem.

Jim, one of the smartest of the crew, who now pulled stroke, remarked this, and addressing me, said,

“Cap, I’ll bet my best hat that it will blow so hard to-night, that the *Woolford’s* anchors will

have a job, the equal of which they never had before."

"What makes you think so, Jim?" asked I.

"Well, you see, them coots is quite foolish-like, and so skeary with thoughts of what's coming, that they don't care about getting out of the way; and last night if the loons didn't keep hollering like Old Scratch all over the Mussel-hole where we were achored then, my name's not Jim, and every sea-faring man knows what that means."

We were soon on our way back again, with an extra-supply of ammunition and a stock of drinkables; the worthy captain, however, although he did not object to others enjoying these luxuries, never himself imbibed anything stronger than coffee. We got quickly on board, and the gig being triced up on the davits, the cutter glided noiselessly through the glassy water, although there was scarcely enough wind to be perceptible.

In making selection of a shooting point, I never met our skipper's equal, for wherever he put down the decoys, there the ducks were

certain to come. This was the result of long experience and study—for it is an art which can be acquired only by the closest observation of wind and temperature.

On gaining Hooper's Straits we came to an anchor close in shore, still in such a position that we could get to sea without difficulty, in case the wind veered and commenced to blow hard. The mate received his final instructions, two dozen decoys were put in the boat, and off we started, full of anticipations of sport.

The captain of the *Woolford* was an excellent shot, possibly a little slow, but very sure, and as pleasant a man to shoot beside as could be found. Such a feeling as jealousy never seemed to enter his mind—a dangerous and disagreeable fault, to which too many sportsmen give way, especially when engaged in this description of shooting. The tide was unfortunately running out, and had become so low that we were unable to reach the point from which we wished to shoot; moreover, an oystering canoe lay close to it stranded, sufficient of itself, if we had been there, to keep off all the wild-

fowl that otherwise would have frequented the spot; so we had to alter our plans and steer for another promontory about a mile distant. On reaching it we found that it had been used before, for the same purpose as that for which we were going to employ it, for a portion of a screen still existed, the remainder having been scattered by the late gales. The part, however, which still existed was fit to be utilized, and by doing so we were saved much trouble. Another advantage which this point possessed was, that the duck were accustomed to see this blind upon it; and as it evidently had not been used for their destruction for a long time, they had ceased to regard it even with suspicion. Getting our arms, ammunition, waterproofs, &c. on shore, we all, with the exception of one of the crew, who was told off to lay out the decoys, set to with a will to gather material for perfecting our hiding-place. Within a hundred yards we discovered a quantity of swamp alder, of which arm-fuls were soon collected, for it is such a brittle wood that limbs as thick as your wrist can be broken off without difficulty.

Around us was scattered an abundance of sea-wreck—a marine weed commonly used in America for stuffing cheap furniture. This we gathered in such quantities that we made with it a nice soft resting-place, over which we stretched our waterproofs to guard us against the damp, or, rather, the wet—for the ground on which we stood was as porous as a sponge, and quite as full of water.

While giving the finishing touches to our screen, the boys discovered a wounded canvas-back duck in a small shallow inlet almost surrounded by land. Their anxiety to secure it attracted my attention, and without taking my gun, I went and joined in the chase; but after innumerable escapes and mishaps, in one of which two of the pursuers obtained duckings through the impetuosity of their pursuit, the poor bird beat them, and gained the open water.

The power of diving possessed by this species of duck is truly marvellous, and the almost electric speed with which they descend under the surface, after having come to breathe, is


astonishing, more particularly when we consider the large size and plump form of these birds. I place them on an equal footing with the mallard, and consider these species superior to all others.

The last of the stool-ducks, or decoys, was being laid down when I returned, and they looked so natural, as they bobbed about on the surface of the water with every ripple of the diminutive waves, that from a distance of one hundred yards anyone might have supposed them really birds. The decoys which I have always used, and which are employed here, are made out of wood, the body being cut out of one piece, and the head out of another, both of which are nailed together. They are painted to represent different varieties of ducks, a pair or more of black ones going with each set. The latter are supposed to look like the large black or marsh duck, and as this bird is particularly wary, the black decoys are generally set outside. To prevent these wooden representatives from turning over, they are weighted with lead or iron, after the manner of the model vessels

with which boys amuse themselves, and two or three yards of string attached to them, with a weight at the end, perform the duty of anchor.

In England, and some of the cities of the United States, I have seen beautiful decoys made out of India-rubber, and from their faithfulness of outline and skilful colouring they are perfect models of the living bird, but have a defect which makes it is necessary to avoid them, for from being hollow, if a chance grain of shot should hit them, an aperture into their body will be made, through which the water will leak, until they become water-logged, and sink. Nor can they stand knocking about, and they have the disadvantage of being expensive. Two dozen decoys are a fair number—four dozen an abundance—for ordinary point-shooting, and these can be obtained at Messrs. Poultney and Trimbles, a most obliging and accommodating Baltimore firm, for about four dollars per dozen. Of course it must be understood that I am speaking of the wooden, not of the India-rubber, decoys.

The stools having been set out, and the boat secreted under an overhanging brow, assisted by



one of the crew, who was to perform the duty of look-out man, we got into the screen, rather hurriedly, I acknowledge; but the reason was, that a large flock of bald-pates (American widgeon) were seen heading in our direction. Possibly we also were seen by them before we perceived their approach, for soon after they changed their course, and gave us the cold shoulder.

But this disappointment was of short duration, for four red-heads, all drakes, and looking truly beautiful in their magnificent plumage of red and grey, came skimming along the surface, evidently with their eyes so intent on the decoys that they could see nothing else. In a moment they were abreast of our position, and as we rose to fire, they lowered and divided; but it was too late. My companion killed one with each barrel, and I did the same. Immediately afterwards the look-out exclaimed, "Down!" and down we went as flat to the ground as it was possible. After waiting a few moments, the Captain said,

"What is it, Jim?"

"Only a black duck, sir," was the reply.

On this the Captain gently raised himself to take an observation, and report progress.

“He’s a little bit doubtful of the safety of the operation, but I think he will toll in yet. Now he’s heading this way—I believe he’s coming—no, he’s turned off again, the cunning old fox! But he has not seen us, I am certain—no, he has not, for he’s heading this way, and coming for us like a skyrocket. Keep still, for a move will catch his eye. Now’s your time.” And up we rose together, but in an instant the wary bird had seen us, and was skyrocketting with a velocity that I believe no other fowl is able to emulate; but the deadly shot was more rapid than his movements, and down fell the splendid duck, broken-winged.

The chase that the lads had after him was, as the Americans say, a “caution;” and I feel certain they followed him half a mile before they succeeded in giving him with a stretcher a knock that rendered him *hors de combat*.

For about a quarter of an hour our patience was tried, and this possibly made us careless, for when I raised myself to look over the screen,

there was actually a black-head duck apparently examining the decoys with the greatest curiosity. I gave the poor bird a chance for his life—true, it was a slight one, and turned out a losing card, but he was not the first, by long odds, that had drawn one. As the day advanced our sport increased, and as we both had ample means of disposing of our game, we had no qualms of conscience in killing it.

At length a black cloud, no larger than a pocket-handkerchief, was seen in the north-west, just over the line of the horizon. Gradually, but steadily, it gained elevation, and other clouds, larger in size, and more intense in colour, followed in its wake, and on either flank. At first they did not look sufficiently threatening to attract more than usual attention; but when, soon afterwards, the most brilliant lightning was reflected by them, the order was given to up decoys, and make ready for an immediate start for the cutter.

Scarcely a breath of wind had as yet reached us, the only perceptible change being a rapid diminution in the temperature, and a cold, inky

glare over the water. The boat shot out from its hiding-place, the active crew rapidly gathered the decoys, and while they did so, the wild ducks, quite regardless of their presence, dropped down alongside the boat. Poor birds, they anticipated the warring of the elements, and dreading it even more than the presence of man, they chose his society, as if it were for protection.

Almost the last stool-duck had been lifted, when an old gander hovered over it, and closing his wings, dropped, as if to light in its vicinity. My gun for some time had been idle, but this last temptation I could not resist, and fired. The bird fell severely wounded, but not close at hand. By this time a puff of wind had struck us—scarcely more than might result from the displacement of air by a lady's fan, but still quite perceptible. My companion, in his quiet, measured language, turned and said to me,

“It is coming, and before long it will reach us. We cannot lift that goose, for if we reach the cutter before it is upon us, it is all we can do.”

The lads in the boat, having picked up the last decoy, were about to start in pursuit of my last victim—indeed, had made some progress in its direction before their intention was noticed; but they were recalled in the same quiet manner as before, but still in a way that enforced obedience to the letter.

When the boat came alongside the bank on which we stood, I jumped into the stern-sheets, deliberately, and without hurry, followed by my companion. Quietly enveloping himself in his waterproof, he said, in his usual measured and marked words,

"We must reach the *Woolford* before this storm breaks over us; if not, we shall have to run before the gale, and, unless I am mistaken, we shall have the coldest night out doors that either of us has ever passed. Give way, my hearties."

And they did lay to their oars, and every stroke sent the stem of our heavily-laden boat almost underneath the leaden-looking water. In an amazingly short time we had accomplished a mile, and so far nothing but cat's-paws of wind had touched us.

"Lay to, my lads," said our skipper, "and in ten minutes more, God willing, we shall be alongside."

This man, who never by chance used an oath, or more forcible language than is commonly employed in the usual avocations of life, such as God willing, induced me to pay additional attention to the indications that foreshadowed the coming storm. The whole north-west, up to the zenith, was black as ink, and the lightning played across it, the brilliancy of the electric fluid being wonderfully increased from its contrast to so dark a background. The air, far and near, was filled with wild-fowl, winging their way to some favourite haven of safety. It was a grand moment, and recalled the minutes of repose when two opposing armies are waiting for the flag of truce to be pulled down ere they recommence hostilities.

The good crew strained vigorously upon the pliant ash oars, no sign of fear on their countenances, but in their eyes and on their brows an expression that betokened unfaltering resolution. A dozen more long and powerful strokes fol-

lowed, driving us hissing through the almost stagnant-looking waters; and as the skipper sung out "way enough," the echo of a distant rumbling was heard across the face of the bay, telling us that the strife of the elements had commenced.

During our absence the mate had not been idle, for the cutter's topmast had been struck, and she rode on so short a cable that but a turn of the capstan was required to trip the anchor.

In a well-disciplined vessel every man knows his place in time of emergency, and there he will be found. On board the *Woolford* such was eminently the case, so that two minutes after we had gained her clean smooth deck, the boat we had employed was on board, the anchor was up, and a close-reefed mainsail was shaken out.

I looked anxiously to windward, to see the approach of the storm. A few puffs of wind marked the surface of the sea, but these gradually became larger and larger, till the whole expanse of the water was soon marked with

them. Better this by far, I thought, than for the storm to break upon us before we had got headway; and the captain, I believe, was of the same opinion.

At length our gallant little craft feels the breeze, and from scarcely having steerage-way, we increase our pace to about four or five knots per hour. Then came a sharp puff, under which we heeled for a moment, our speed increased, and in an instant after the hurricane was upon us, and our vessel was flying like a frightened steed, the face of the waters resembling a seething caldron, and the foam of the battling waves deluging our deck. The sight was grand and terrible—one which it requires some resolution to look upon, but which cannot be regarded without admiration. While such scenes impress us with a sense of our own utter insignificance, do they not also remind us of the Deity whom we are so prone to forget?

I have been in typhoons in China, cyclones in the Indian Ocean, hurricanes in the West Indies, and gales in the Atlantic, but with the excep-

tion of one occasion, I never saw the power of the wind so exemplified. Formidable, however, as was the storm, our vessel was staunch and true, and handled with such precision, I could not but admire the skill and daring with which so perfect a specimen of man's handiwork was managed.

At length we had got sufficient offing to run for our harbour, and in a moment we were on the other tack, and easing off gradually, we appeared to fly over the foam-covered waters. The squall ceased very suddenly. When we reached our moorings, which was within an hour of the time when we tripped our anchor, nothing remained to indicate our experience of the storm but a close mainsail. The cold was so intense that every drop of water which lay upon the decks became a cake of ice; and a fresh danger threatened us—viz., that of being frozen in. But a second squall, equally severe with the first, burst upon us, the second anchor had to be "let go," and even then we dragged for a considerable distance. However, the severity of the wind had the beneficial effect

of breaking up the ice, which had rapidly commenced to hem us in. Our bows and bowsprit were now a sight to create astonishment in eyes that had never looked upon a similar spectacle, for blocks of ice of every shape and form adhered to them in such a way as to alter entirely their original appearance.

During the night squall succeeded squall, but when day broke, the fury of the elements had ceased, and a gentle steady breeze succeeded.

After great labour we got free from the ice, and stood across for Devil's Island. The whole of Tangier Sound was filled with miniature icebergs, few of which had not upon their rugged surface some description of diver, many of them belonging to species that only appear here after such gales, and whose proper *habitat* is far off to the North.

The thermometer was still so low that ice was rapidly forming in all sheltered places; and the captain therefore determined to send me ashore, and then run for Crisfield, where, if the whole bay was frozen up, he would find a

more central position, and where his services would be of greater use.

The wind and the ice had not dealt gently with this portion of Devil's Island, for several oyster-dredgers were high and dry ashore; wreck and broken timber strewed the beach; trees lay smashed and prostrate in confusion; and the shingle was deeply margined with ice; while the schooners and sloops that had succeeded in holding to their moorings, had a great resemblance to icebergs, from the congealed water that hung to them.

The cutter was to stand off and on till the boat which was to land me had returned to her; and when I stepped into the dingy's stern-sheets, with two of the best hands on board for her crew, I was well aware that I had before me no easy task. Up and down the shore we sought for an entrance, or for a place where we could break one, but without success. At length I put the boat about, with the intention of returning on board; but we had not gone far, when some open water was discovered inside the outer ice-line. After exhibiting a great

amount of patience over one of the coldest jobs I almost ever remember, we succeeded in breaking a passage into it, and on traversing the unfrozen part, I found the ice on the inner side sufficiently strong to bear my weight. I therefore bid the lads adieu, and started for home. However, to reach it was no easy matter, for I was loaded with gun, ammunition, waterproofs, and a number of duck, the latter frozen as stiff and hard as brickbats, and the place where I had disembarked was on a peninsula.

The creek which severed it from the mainland being, much to my disgust, not frozen, I had to tramp round some miles, through drift, brush, and innumerable impediments, before I could gain the high road that led to my residence; and when I did arrive there, I was really so worn out, that I think a mile more would have used me up. But a good breakfast, and an hour or two's rest in a comfortable arm-chair, in the *negligé* costume of slippers and dressing-gown, soon made me feel all right; and as I blew a cloud, I could see in the ever-changing fragrant tobacco-smoke pictures of

the stirring scenes I had gone through in the last twenty-four hours.

There were other persons on Devil's Island who had also their adventures on that terrible night to relate, but none were more worthy of noting than those of my landlord. He had been induced, through the calmness of the preceding morning, to join some companions on a trip to the Mussel-hole to shoot wild-fowl. This place is eight or nine miles distant from his house. A large canoe—such a one as would probably be capable of carrying two tons of freight—was the craft they selected for their purpose. Now these vessels, although remarkably long and narrow, are wonderfully seaworthy, carrying a jib and pair of shoulder-of-mutton sails, or occasionally dispensing with the jib when the foremast is stepped in the stem. From mid-ship forward these boats are decked, while along either gunwale aft, from the termination of the covered portion, runs a wide ridge, finished off inside with a lath, which rises several inches above this marginal decking, and is intended to throw off such water as,

without it, would wash into the body of the canoe. They all have centre-boards. A more weathery craft of the size, if properly handled, it is almost impossible to find; and among the inhabitants of Devil's Island there is not a person who does not understand boating in its minutest details.

The landlord and his companions got to their destination, and found game very abundant, but shot excessively badly, some of the party blaming the guns, others the ammunition, for their want of success.

Disregarding the threatening appearances of the weather, they postponed their departure, with the hope of being more successful. At length, having obtained about a dozen duck, they got under way, and when about mid-channel, the gale struck them. The roar that preceded its coming having been accepted as a warning of what might be expected, every stitch of canvas was taken in, and the canoe's head kept straight into the wind's eye. But for this step, they never could have lived through it, and all agreed that they never

remembered being placed in so hazardous a position. However, their skill as boatmen prevailed, and at ten o'clock they were close in upon Devil's Island, which was a lee-shore. Nevertheless, they preferred a ducking, with the possibility of being drowned in the surf, to passing such a night in an open boat. Fortunately, all succeeded in gaining land safely, very much to the delight of the landlord's wife, to whom he had only been married a few months. She vows that he shall never go duck-shooting again, and he states that nothing will tempt him to do so. I wonder how long both will remain in the same mind? Not very long, I venture to prophesy, if the latter is as fond of the sport as I am.

To obtain a fresh supply of ammunition and some other necessities, I found it was again requisite to visit Baltimore. This time I did so by taking boat to Crisfield, and there catching one of the Bay steamers on her return voyage. On board was a person that attracted my attention—a tall, well-made, intelligent-looking man. He might have been thirty, possibly

less, but he had a travelled bronzed look that made any guess as to his age very uncertain. As the chief steward passed me I called him on one side, and asked who the unknown gentleman was.

“Oh,” said the darky, “you not know him. Well, he Mr. B——, one of the richest gentlemen in this country; he worth million dollars, and make all himself in ‘Petroleum.’”

Soon after this conversation I went out on the sponsons to smoke a cigar, when the unknown passed me. In his manner I thought I saw signs that he wished to speak to me, and but for the knowledge I had obtained regarding his wealth, I would have made overtures to him to commence an acquaintance. However, he returned in a few minutes, and apologising, he addressed me in a quiet gentlemanly manner, stating that he had been informed that I was an Englishman; and as we were countrymen, he should like, if I did not object, to have a chat about the motherland. After finishing our weeds, we adjourned to his cabin, where every evidence of wealth could be seen in the hand-

some cigar-case, dressing-case, and other addenda lying about the state-room. From his known position, we were permitted to retain the lamp burning, and so sat in most agreeable conversation till almost daybreak. At Baltimore we parted, but not until I had promised to pay him a visit, at his house, within twenty miles of that city.

A few days afterwards I went to this gentleman's residence, and a more charming place could scarcely be found. It was kept in such perfect order that the observer was at once conveyed in thought to one of our old, time-honored family residences, which are the boast and pride of England. The quiet, unobtrusive, pretty, but timid little wife, who is mistress of this charming home—although looking rather overburdened with the responsibilities of her position—is, if personal beauty be taken as a criterion, well worthy of her honours. My host told me the story of his life. After I had heard it I said I should like to make use of it. He said, "Certainly, and as I have amused myself by writing it, it is at your service. Only suppress

the name, for I do not desire notoriety." A few days after I left I received the following. It has been slightly altered, it is true, but the incidents remain unchanged.

CHAPTER V.

STORY OF A FELLOW-COUNTRYMAN—A BAD START IN LIFE—
MY FIRST STEP FOR A LIVING—A GENTLEMANLY FELLOW—
A FEAST—JOE GREENGAGE AND SALLY TURNOVER—SCENES
AT GREENWICH—AN OVERTHROW—POVERTY AND HON-
ESTY—THE POSSESSION OF WEALTH—MY LITTLE SWEET-
HEART IN TROUBLE—THE NOBLEMAN'S CARD—A LET-
TERED CHARWOMAN—BROTHER BONES.



CHAPTER V.

I SUPPOSE I had a father and a mother; I can scarcely believe that Providence would have brought me into the world without granting me those ties of consanguinity, which he had hitherto been in the habit of vouchsafing to all my race. Still, whether I was an exception to the rule or not, I can only say that I do not remember ever to have seen those doubtless amiable persons to whom I owe my origin. Thus you will observe that I had what would generally be considered, a bad start in life; for instead of having somebody's shoes to step into, I had no shoes, but such as I obtained or manufactured for myself; in other words, I had to begin life at the bottom of the ladder—not half way up, as the majority of people do. There may be advantage, or

the reverse, in such a commencement. I should say the former, for little can be expected of a man who has no antecedents. So, if I never rose in the world, I held my own, and that is more than the wealthy and well-born have always done; but if, on the other hand, through perseverance and energy, I have got on, no credit is due to anyone but myself. Another thing involved in equal mystery with my parentage is, where was I born? Even up to this date I have never been able to discover this. However, I am now becoming indifferent to the solution of this mystery, for relations, cousins of many degrees removed, might be exhumed, and as I have a very great objection to common-bred people, and can scarcely expect that they would be otherwise, I prefer remaining in ignorance on this point. Further, there is something delightful in this uncertainty regarding my birthplace, for I can wander about through any portion of London, as I did on my last visit, and say to myself, with perfect justice, when I come opposite a house of more than usually attractive appearance, "Charlie, my boy, who knows but in that

very dwelling you first saw the light of day.” As I have a great weakness for being thought somebody, not nobody’s child, it would be most disagreeable to my feelings to know that the New Cut or Clare Market had the honour of claiming me, on account of my being born within the precincts of one or the other.

There is a certain portion of our lives of which all that reach maturity must profess ignorance. I cannot say that, in my individual case, I deplore this circumstance, for it is more than doubtful that I ever was the recipient of silver whistles and bells, lolly-pops or fervent kisses, from numerous gushing young ladies. If I had ever received the latter, I should doubtless have retained some impression of the luxuries ; and as I do not, I am inclined to believe that I did not get them ; for where I lived, with whom I associated, and what I did until I was seven years of age, or thereabouts, is a perfect blank to my memory. But at that period of my existence, when I was about seven years of age, a little occurrence took place, which, should I live to the age of Methuselah, will be indelibly im-

pressed upon my mind, for it had much to do in forming that portion of my character which has enabled me to combat successfully with the cold and heartless world.

On a cold and raw November morning, Mrs. Grudge (I usually called her Aunty, although I am morally certain that we were in no ways blood relations) says to me,

“Joe Sharp, you must be doing something now to earn a living, and to make some return to me for all the expense, trouble, and anxiety I have bestowed upon your early education. There are heaps of boys not as old or strong as you are, that bring home, every day of their lives, sufficient to pay for their grub; so I feel no ways inclined to encourage you further in idleness. Now take these boxes of cigar-lights, and sell as many as you can. Mind they are to be a half-penny each to ordinary folks, and a penny to real swells, or such coves as be taking their gals for an outing, for you see these young sparks don't like to be thought close when their lass is with them, whatever they might be if alone.”

At first I refused to go, for I did not feel that I had confidence enough to stop people on the streets, and ask them to buy from me ; but this was of no avail, for Mrs. Grudge first argued, then scolded, occasionally cuffing me, when I commenced to cry, on which her blows were bestowed faster and heavier. I held out, however, and gained a day's respite, but that was all, for the old woman refused to give me any more food till I complied with her wishes. At first I thought that I could do without anything to eat for ever so long, but when dinner-time came the next day, and there was no food for me, I felt all my resolution fly to the winds, so pulling my cap over my brows, I snatched up the fusees and rushed into the street.

Now at that time Aunty lived in Mill Lane, Deptford ; not a bad kind of place in its way, for it was convenient to the water-works, the creek, several railroad stations, and the river ; so that its residents—particularly those of my age and sex—were within easy access of places both of amusement and business. From Mill Lane I rushed into the Broadway, and along it

to the North Kent Railroad Station. When I arrived there the passengers from a train were coming into the road. Among them was a young man—quite the gentleman, for he was rather drunk, and dressed exactly like one of the nice figures in a tailor's window. I was just about to ask him if he wanted a light, when he exclaimed, in that impetuous manner which so denotes breeding, "Lights, boy?" Cowering beneath his gaze, and feeling how unworthy I was even to serve him, I slipped a box into his hand, and when I looked for payment he remained for a long time fumbling for change; but, alas! among the innumerable pieces of gold and silver he so thoughtlessly held exposed, not a copper was to be found. I stood by shivering, for I thought he would never get change to pay me; nor did he, but chucking a shilling into a puddle, he said to me, "If you can get that out you have earned it," and walked away. How gentlemanly and liberal was such conduct! It was easy to see that he was well-bred.

The mud where the shilling fell was deep,

soft, and sticky; but I had marked the spot so well that, in a quarter of an hour, I had it in my hands. How rich I felt may well be imagined, when I say that never before had I been the possessor of so much wealth. So, with light heart and rapid strides I hurried home, to lay in old Aunty's hands the fruits of my first essay in money-making.

What a change came over the old woman as soon as she saw the bright piece of silver. In a moment all her crossness vanished, and she was unable to express her feelings in words of sufficient kindness and encouragement; adding that she had always predicted that I would be a treasure, and that her late severity had only resulted from her desire to make me useful and manly, that it was all for my own good, and that in the end I would thank her for the efforts she had made in my behalf. This might all be true enough; still I could not help feeling—although I did not dare to express it—that the old lady had certainly a strange way of showing her affection for me.

What a blow-out that shilling produced! and

how I enjoyed it, for it was really the first honest meal I could recall. It was composed of sausages and potatoes—the former beautifully browned, the latter mashed; and didn't I tuck in! How often, before then, had I seen your regular nobs eating them at the public-houses; and haven't I envied them, without hoping ever to be able to do the same. But how little do we know what fortune has in store for us, for here was I having a regular feed of the very food that the big-bugs enjoyed. Sausages are nice food, they are so spicy, and without bones, no deception in them, as in butcher's meat, where half you pay for is bone, as hard and unserviceable as paving-stones. Well, I did justice, and no mistake, for I stowed three away, with no end of potatoes, and don't know but that I might have eaten more, only Auntie said it was uncommonly vulgar to eat till one felt uncomfortable. So she removed what was left, not wishing, good woman, to encourage vulgarity!

The earning of my first shilling, and the enjoyment of a meal—the like of which I had

never had before—caused me to think how I was to obtain more money, and with it more sausages and potatoes; but the more I thought the more puzzled I became, till at length I gave the matter up, being thoroughly satisfied in my infantile mind that vending fusees, although not the most lucrative branch of commerce, still possessed some advantages, chief among which were the simplicity of the accounts, and the facility with which one could transport his stock in trade from place to place.

However, fusees have their disadvantages also. Wet weather is apt to make them incombustible. Experience taught me this to my cost. Joe Greengage was a costermonger. Cauliflowers and rhubarb were what he chiefly dealt in, and so good was his business—for poor folks are fond of rhubarb, and city clerks and such half gentry of cauliflowers—that on Sundays he used to turn out a regular swell. Now, he kept company with Sally Turnover, who used to gather old rags and paper, and at times scrape among the ashes for odds and ends that were thrown out by mistake into the dust-

hole. However, she had her face washed, and was rigged in her porkpie hat and a gingham dress, which was given her for doing some charing, the neighbours said she looked every inch a lady; for she could look you straight in the face as if she didn't care a fig for anybody, and could elbow her way through a crowd, shoving folks off the side-walk as if none had as good a right to the pavement as herself. Well, it was a Sunday evening, and I was beside a church door waiting for the people to come out; not that church-going folks are much of smokers in public, but still I thought there was a chance of getting rid of a box or two which I had remaining over, the morning having been too wet for me to do a good early trade, when whom should I see coming along but Joe Greengage with all his best togs on, and Sally Turnover on his arm. When he saw me he stopped, and asked for a box of fusees. After handing him one he pulled out a cigar-case, which, may I be blessed, if it was not full of regular proper cigars, such as are sold at thirteen for a shilling. There was no denying that he was used to such

luxuries, for he bit the end off one and put it into his mouth, just as any ordinary person would that had never done anything so common in the smoking line as sucking the end of a clay pipe. Then he tried to light a fusee, but failed; a second and third he tried with equal want of success; and I began to wish that I had gone on instead of gaping at him, when I was awakened from my reverie by getting the contents of the box full in my face, and half-a-dozen cuts of his nobby cane.

Not that I suffered any bodily pain from this treatment, but I was hurt in mind, for, although my fusees would not light, I was ignorant of the fact that they had been ruined by the morning damp. The oath which my assailant uttered as he walked away, and the urgent but far from polite request of a policeman that I would move on, brought me to myself. So, going homewards, I chewed the bitter cud of reflection on the injustice of the treatment I had suffered; and I could not help asking myself how it was that I occupied so insignificant a place in the surging crowds that formed the

population of this great city. But who can tell what may be the results of the most unlikely causes? Ere I reached home I resolved never to place myself again in anyone's power by vending a worthless article, and to struggle on till I attained such a position as would place me above the meddling interference of a pompous official.

When I had arrived at the age of eleven years, or thereabouts, another marked episode in my career occurred. It had a bright and a dark side; still the sunshine overbalanced the shadow. It was early Summer, and to enjoy the fresh breeze that always blows up the river of an afternoon, to gaze upon the numerous ships going and returning from distant countries, and to try a new market for my wares, I directed my steps to the lower portion of Greenwich, with a larger than usual stock of fusees.

I soon reached the front of the Ship Hotel, where the numbers of well-dressed persons, arriving in vehicles of the handsomest description, struck me with awe; while the studs, and

rings, and chains that each wore, and the dresses that both males and females were habited in, awoke in me astonishment as to the source where so much wealth could be procured. Then how could I but admire the gentlemen in swallow-tailed coats and white neckties, that opened the carriage-doors so smartly, and welcomed with such bland courtesy each visitor.

What amiable and unselfish hosts I thought they must be, for instead of ascending to the upper rooms to enjoy the profuse hospitality which was apparently being furnished by them, they were satisfied to remain below, and receive each fresh arrival, without gratifying their inner man, except by snatching from some half-consumed dish, on its return to the kitchen, a small portion of its contents when they believed no eye was upon them. What generous hosts were these, I thought, thus to ignore their own feelings in favour of those they wished to honour!

However, the appearance of a crowd of youths of my own age having a bath in the river,

almost in front of the Hospital, induced me to move on, that by close inspection I might the better enjoy their fun. None of them were particularly good swimmers—not so good, in fact, as I was, for I had learned that art in Deptford Creek, under the instruction of Bill Smith, afterwards known as the Great Natator of Cremorne Gardens and the Cirque Napoléon at Paris; who had further, as he himself assured me, dined with all the crowned heads in Europe, and been invited to a *fête champêtre* by the King of Ashantee; for he had become a regular swell, and no mistake, and that all through his wonderful swimming powers.

I had stood for more than a quarter of an hour looking at the bathers, when a great steamboat, grunting under the weight of her load, and followed by a tremendous groundswell, passed by. Oh! what fun the youngsters had in the waves as they raced along the beach; and how I wished to join them in their frolics! And I will, thought I; but scarcely had I made up my mind to do so, when it suddenly occurred to me that as it was washing-

day at home, I had no shirt on. However, I was nearly disregarding this circumstance, my inclination for the water almost outbalancing sense of modesty, for I thought that if any questions were asked, I could explain that I really had a shirt in the hands of Aunty Grudge. Still, on mature thought, I recalled the scepticism of the children of the higher classes with respect to any statements made by unknown strangers; so occasionally turning my head with longing eyes to the scene of pleasure, to avoid further temptation I slowly but steadily pursued my way along the railed in path, hoping that the time might yet come when washing-days would no longer deprive me of a portion of my clothing that is not without some utility.

At length I reached the front of the Trafalgar Hotel, the visitors of which I found too grand for my business, as for more than an hour I tried to sell some of my wares, but without success. At last, tired and hungry, I sat down under the railings opposite, and forgot my own wants in listening to the sounds of merry

voices, and the melodious tinkling of glasses that issued from the numerous windows. There was a novelty in my situation which was so fascinating that, as often as I resolved to go, so often did I postpone my departure.

At length the increased shadows told me that sunset was near at hand; while my craving stomach admonished me that I must be doing, and that quickly, or go supperless to bed. At this moment a groom led two handsome horses to the hotel door—animals looking so proud and defiant, and their coats so silky and glossy as they glanced in the bright light of declining day, that I could not withstand the temptation of tarrying a little longer to gaze upon them, and admire their graceful proportions. At length a gentleman came out, evidently their owner. He took the reins of one in his hand, and raised his left foot into the stirrup, when, just as he was about to spring into the saddle, his horse reared and started; the rider's right foot slipped, he lost his balance, and fell. In a moment I sprang forward, and seized the bridle of the fractious animal; but not a moment too

soon, for already it had dragged its owner several paces. The whole happened so quickly, that the groom was scarcely aware of what had occurred till his master had regained his feet; but a crowd of anxious persons soon assembled around him, to whose repeated inquiries if he was hurt, he replied by an assurance that he was "only slightly shaken."

The horses were despatched home under the care of the servant, their owner stating that he would take a seat in the carriage of a friend, who was among the company in the hotel. I was just about to go, for I perceived the gentleman to whom the accident had occurred was ready to enter the Trafalgar, when his eye caught mine,

"Come here, lad," he exclaimed.

I approached him, and in my hand he placed a coin—sixpence, from its size, I felt certain it was. So, feeling more than over-paid, I touched my hat and left. Luck had been in my way this day, I thought, for I was sixpence richer, and still had my fusees. None of my pockets being in a thorough state of repair for any coin

more diminutive than a halfpenny, I retained it in my hand, clasping it tightly ; for I had then strange ideas that some unseen agency might whisk it away from my possession, if such precautions were not taken.

At length, when I was alone, I made up my mind to have an inspection of my treasure, to know whether it was new or old, thick or thin, crooked, or with a hole in it. To do so without attracting attention, I seated myself upon the steps used by the boatmen to gain the water's edge. Slowly I loosened the fingers which held my treasure, and looked again and again at it. Could it be ?—was it possible ?—or did I dream ? It was gold—the first coin of that metal I had ever possessed in my life. But was it mine ?—had the gentleman not made a mistake in giving me so large a sum ? He might have committed the same error as I had myself, when I believed it to be sixpence. I will return and hand it to him. But I hesitated. I am ashamed to say a still, small voice whispered, “ Keep it ; you have earned it—no one will know ; and if they did, have you not a

right to suppose that the person was so wealthy that the gift was intentional?"

The longer I delayed, the weaker became my good resolution, and I felt less capable of resisting the temptation. But the rattling of the wheels of a quickly-driven carriage broke the spell which bound me, and I turned and looked round. In front of the hotel stood several gentlemen, prominent among whom was the owner of the horses. The moment I saw him my better thoughts resumed the mastery, and I resolved to return to its owner the tempting coin which had so nearly made me dishonest.

With my cap firmly drawn over my brows—for I feared lest my forehead should bear the stamp of my late wicked thoughts—I approached the group, which I had all but reached, when one of the gentlemen raised his cane, and ordered me to be off. A policeman, at the same time, seized me, and was dragging me back, when I was recognised by him I sought, who, with gentleness in his manner, requested I might be released, and in a moment I stood free. But when he desired me to speak, to say

what I wanted—for my look told him that I wished to speak to him—the words refused to come, and unbidden tears burst from my eyes. How long I should have remained so, I know not; but when the policeman remarked, “The little scoundrel does not think he is paid enough, my lord, for the trifling service he rendered you,” this speech recalled me to myself, and with angry voice and flashing eye, I denied the imputation.

“Well, what is it, my boy?” urged my friend, for I saw he was such, he spoke so kindly to me.

In a moment I told him the truth, and tried to replace the money in his hands.

“No, my lad—no, it is yours. I made no mistake. Keep it, and come and see me to-morrow; here is my address.”

As they entered the carriage to drive off, the last words I heard my benefactor utter were, “You see now what I said is true—a better proof you could not have—that poverty and honesty often go together.”

With a light heart and heavy purse—a

combination I always believed associated—I turned my steps towards home, anticipating the pleasure I should have in placing in Aunty Grudge's hands my golden treasure. In imagination what hosts of luxuries and necessities were to be procured by it! In fact, it appeared an amount of wealth that the most lavish expenditure would never bring to an end; and although just as ragged, dirty, and uncombed as when I had left Mill Lane in the morning, the change that had occurred in my fortune made me carry my head higher, walk more jauntily, and feel a degree of independence never before known. I was even bold enough to look into the brilliantly-lighted windows of London Street and Greenwich Road, enjoying a pleasure of which I had never before been conscious—that of knowing that it was in my power to purchase many of the attractive articles I saw.

Although it had been a long day, and I had eaten nothing since morning, I did not feel hungry, possibly because I was conscious that I possessed the means of gratifying my appetite.

Even if it had been otherwise, however, I would not have parted with my half-sovereign, for it was gold, and never before this day had I been able to put into my foster-mother's hands metal of that colour.

At length I reached Deptford Bridge, on the side-walk of which stood a crowd, evidently attracted by something unusual. I elbowed my way through it to gratify my curiosity, and, to my surprise, found it to be caused by little Mary Williams, who lived next door but one to us in Mill Lane, and who was crying bitterly.

Poor girl! she had reason to cry, for her mother was a bad-tempered, hard-drinking woman, who never lost an opportunity of venting her wrath by blows upon her unfortunate child. Now Mary and I had been playfellows for years. She was the same age as myself, and somehow I liked her better than anyone I knew. We used to go on Sunday afternoons to Greenwich Park together, on Easter Mondays to gather buttercups and daisies in the fields between New Cross and Ladywell, and she often sewed up holes in my clothes; for Aunty Grudge had not

the best of sight, and, without Mary's assistance, I should have had to go about more ragged than I usually did. In fact—and there is no use hiding the matter, for I am not ashamed of it—we were sweethearts, at least I used to call her mine; although I can't positively say that she ever called me the same, in return. Yet I knew she liked me, for she always went with me when I was about, although Bill Joyce tried to take her off with him, and said ever so many nasty things against me to her, all of which were untrue.

So, seeing Mary in trouble, I forced my way to her side. As soon as she saw me, she placed her hand upon my shoulder and buried her head on my breast, sobbing so hard and so long that I could not learn the cause of her troubles; I wanted to take her home, but she would not go, and the more I urged her the more she cried. At length we sat down together in a corner out of the way of the traffic, and she told me that her mother had given her a shilling to buy two quarterns of gin, and that she had shown it to Bill Joyce, who had told her it was not good;

and that when she had given it to him to try if such were the case he had pretended to lose it, and then run off; and now she feared to go home, feeling certain that her mother would half kill her. Now Mary was a clean, kind, and pretty girl—there was none like her in Mill Lane—and I loved her just as well as if she had been my sister, so I soon made up my mind what I should do. Asking her for her bottle, I started across the way, and in no time was back with the gin, which I handed to her, with the twopence of change that remained from the shilling which had been taken out of my golden treasure. So home we trudged together, parting in front of her door, as happy and contented as if we had never known a moment's grief.

When I got into our house, I told Auntie all that had happened, handed her the money that remained, and explained how there was a shilling deficient; at which the good old soul commended my conduct, but, by way of warning, said that such goodness of heart was well enough in its way, once in a time, but should not be too often repeated. However, with a

liberality that was truly praiseworthy, she added that I should make Bill Joyce give me back the shilling he had misappropriated, and that, if he did so, I might retain it for myself. I therefore determined to lose no opportunity of endeavouring to obtain an amount of spending money that promised an unlimited supply of nuts and fruit. As I was turning out the odds and ends in my pockets before going to bed, I found my benefactor's card which, from the moment when it had been given me till now, I had forgotten.

"Look here, Aunty," says I; "this is the name of the gentleman that gave me the money. He handed this to me, and asked me to come and see him to-morrow."

She took the card, and after a long and patient examination, professed her incapacity to decipher it, and consequently the pleasure of knowing to whom I was indebted was deferred till the morrow. Next morning a confidential friend of the old lady's was called in. She was reported to be possessed of a large amount of book-learning, for she had once been charwoman at a seminary for young ladies on Blackheath

Hill; nor had she been accredited with more knowledge than she possessed, for, after spelling each letter over not oftener than three times, she arrived at the conviction that the address on the card was Lord Broadacres, Belgrave Square, and that he consequently was the person who had given it to me.

After this discovery a long and earnest conversation ensued between the two old women over a cup of tea, which, although they frequently differed in the minor points, resulted in the decision that my fortune was made, and that I was on the high road to some exalted position, either in the capacity of a valet-de-sham, or whipper-in to a pack of hounds. By dint of repeated use of a borrowed old shoe-brush and some blacking, turning up the bottoms of my trousers where they were ragged, and pinning on a paper collar, with an old silk pocket-handkerchief carefully folded inside my vest, I was pronounced to be looking quite a swell, and fit to go into any society. I never was so grand before, and therefore felt the justice of this remark; so started to London with a light step and lighter heart.

To Belgrave Square was a good six miles, but what was that? I could do it in a couple of hours. And who knows, thought I, what may be the result? Strange to say, the further I went the more nervous I became, and even the picked speeches that I had got on the tip of my tongue were all forgotten, nor could I remember a word of them by the time I reached my destination. At length I arrived in the Square, but not knowing the house I sought, I asked a little bit of a fellow dressed in top-boots, and a canary-coloured vest, striped with black, no bigger than myself, which was the residence of Lord Broadacres.

"Booby," says he—that was just the word he used—"that's it," pointing out a place as large as a railroad station.

Thanking him as politely as I could—for I thought, from his grand ways, that he must at least be a lord's son—I crossed over, and knocked at the door. Such a nobby fellow opened it. He was just as tall as the recruiting serjeant with all the medals, who is constantly to be seen about Deptford, and a deal finer dressed.

"Is this Lord Broadacre's?" asked I, in the most insinuating voice I could assume.

"No, it ain't," says he, as sharply as if he were going to knock me down.

Rather staggered at my reception, I endeavoured to inquire which house was his, but was interrupted with the information that, if I didn't be haff, he'd 'and me over to the police, for knocking at his door as any gentleman would. So, seeing a "bobby" coming in my direction, I hesitated no longer, for I'm certain he would have been as good as his word, and possessing a strong objection to making the acquaintance of the force in anything approaching a dubious manner, I hurriedly left. Mentally I resolved not to knock again at any further door I might visit, but try to gain admission by means of some of the numerous bells which are profusely scattered about the doors of the houses of the wealthy.

But I had to walk round the Square three times before I could find anyone in whose countenance I could detect such an expression of kindness as I considered would justify me in

soliciting aid in my difficulty. And it was well for me that this delay took place, for a pin which Auntie had placed in the waistband of my trousers had, from the strain upon it during my long walk, worked itself loose, and what might have been the consequences can easily be imagined. However, I found it out in time to rectify such an unpleasant mistake, for the person I spoke to, observing that a portion of my apparel was unfastened, kindly assisted me in restoring it to a serviceable state. This man belonged to the burnt-cork profession, and was a legitimate member of the Christy Minstrels, for he never performed out of London.

"Tell you where Lord Broadacres lives!—that I can," says he. "Follow me, for I must not be seen talking to persons of a doubtful appearance. Not that I'm ashamed, no, not one bit, only"—and here he dropped his voice, and continued in a whisper—"I'm known by half the aristocracy, and I have position at stake, you twig!"

Now, although I did not exactly twig, I did as I was desired, and followed my sable friend round the corner, afterwards down one or two

minor streets, for I had concluded that my new acquaintance was going to gain me admission to his Lordship through some back entrance to his residence, only known by intimate friends. At length we arrived at a public-house, where we halted.

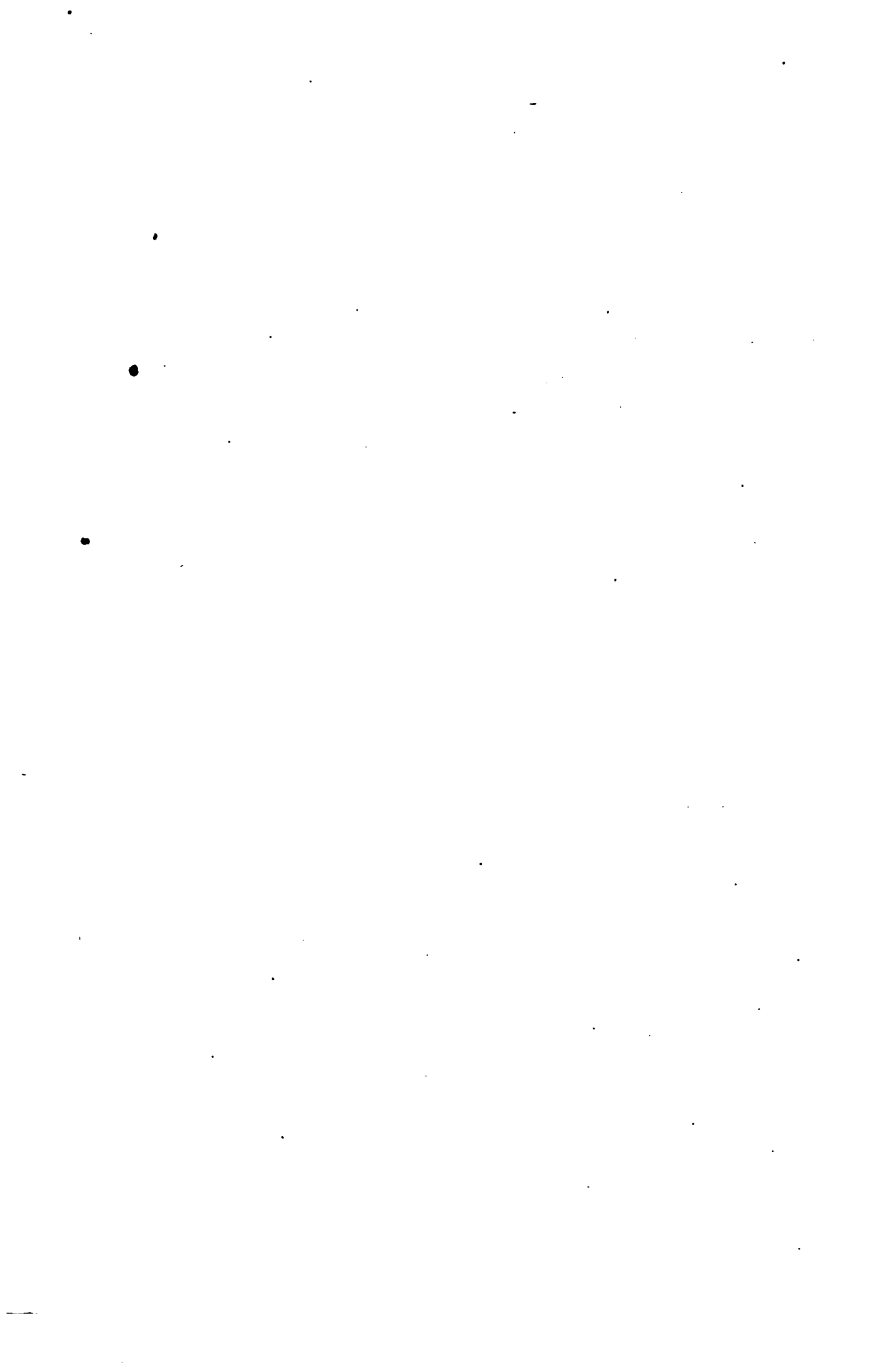
“Stand something,” said my associate. So, not to be outdone in courtesy, and feeling really honoured by such disinterested attention, I replied,

“Yes.”

When we entered I asked for a pint of four ale. While drinking our beer I was surprised to hear Brother Bones—for so the landlord designated him—ask for Lord Broadacres’ address. It was given at once. My countenance must have been an index to the question I was about to put rather indignantly to my guide, for he turned to me and explained, thoroughly to my satisfaction, that he knew so many of the swells about here, and was so constantly their visitor, that he could not help confusing persons and houses together, and thus only sought information to confirm his too often treacherous

memory, and prevent me making a mistake.

Although I parted rather abruptly from him, it was with regret I did so. Still such a course was forced upon me, for he repeatedly hinted that he would be pleased to borrow from me sixpence, or a few coppers, for half an hour; but as all I possessed had gone in paying for the beer, and feeling too proud to acknowledge the emptiness of my pockets, I endeavoured to assume the expression of one who did not understand his desire, and abruptly bid him adieu, pleading the urgency of my affairs as an excuse for my hurry.



CHAPTER VI.

MY COUNTRYMAN'S STORY CONTINUED—RINGING A NOBLEMAN'S
BELL—FIGHT WITH BILL JOYCE—AUNTY'S ADVICE—A
RARE SPECIMEN—DISCOVERY OF A TREASURE—THE MONI-
TIONS OF CONSCIENCE—THE BROADWAY—"THOU SHALT
NOT STEAL"—HONESTY THE BEST POLICY—THE ADVANTAGE
OF DEPTFORD POSTERS—THE FUSEE BUSINESS RENOUNCED
—IN SERVICE.



CHAPTER VI.

HIS Lordship's house I easily recognized from the directions given to Brother Bones by the landlord, so feeling confident that this time I was at the right door, I ascended the porch, and pulled the bell. In doing this I employed no great amount of physical force—in fact, I intended to do it very gently, but, to my horror and utter discomposure, the bell continued ringing till I thought it would never cease; and when it did stop, such was my nervousness that the globules of perspiration stood upon my face like Summer dew upon a grass meadow. The door was opened with a bang, and for a minute not a word was spoken. At length I tried to

speaking, but my voice refused to serve me, so overcome was I with the grand presence in which I stood.

"Who are you that dare ring the visitors' bell?" came in deep notes from my questioner's lips. "Who are you, sir, I demand?"

"I'm—I'm——" but I could get no further. And amid words about being brought upstairs by a low cub, the massive hall-door was slammed in my face.

As I moved from the house I felt that all my resolution was required to keep back the tears that were endeavouring to force themselves out, but I bit my tongue, and struggled against my inclination, for my present position was not one in which it was desirable to indulge in such a luxury. As I, slowly and discouraged, trod my way homeward, I felt that there was a gulf between the rich and the poor in England, which it was impossible to cross, for the intermediate class between them strove hard to make the barrier insuperable.

Tired, and in far from an enviable temper, I reached home. My want of success was nar-

rated, and old Auntie soothed my troubled mind.

"It was to them stuck-up servants," she said, "I owed all my disappointment—nasty, low-bred, stuck-up things. It's your common low scum that puts on airs; the real gentleman never assumes them."

Not feeling disposed to go to work, I thought I'd go up to the waterworks, and on from them into the fields. I had scarcely got to the former, when I met Mary Williams, who had been gathering flowers, and out of her nosegay she took the best buttercups and daisies, and presented them to me. I was going to put them into my button-hole, when some one, whom I had not seen, came up behind and snatched them from my hand. The hot blood of passion rushed into my face, and when I turned and discovered it to be Bill Joyce, I could scarcely restrain the desire I felt to give him a beating. For some minutes we eyed one another with mutual dislike. At length he said,

"Spoony, if you look at me so, I'll punch your head."

"Better for you to return the shilling that you stole," answered I.

"Then you call me a thief, do you?"

"Yes, if so you like to take it; and you are one if you don't give Mary Williams the shilling you took from her last night."

"You are a liar; and so is she." And with that he struck me over the mouth with his open hand.

In a moment more I would have returned the blow, but that Mary threw her arms round me, and held me so tight, and cried so hard, that I could not get from her embrace. But by this time a crowd of boys that knew us both well were gathered round. The biggest of them was a lad that made his living by selling sandstone.

"Keep up your pecker, little one," says he to me. "I'll see you have fair play."

So Mary, little dreaming we were going to fight, released me. In a moment after they had formed a ring, of which Joyce and myself were the centre. I didn't want to fight—no, not one bit; moreover, my antagonist was

older and bigger than myself, but there was no chance to back out, for my enemy called me a coward, accompanying his words with a second blow. So I pulled off my jacket, not wishing it to be torn in the scuffle, and handed it to my backer; then put up my guards—for although I knew nothing of boxing, I had seen others have a turn at it. Up came Joyce, with a smile of confident victory; and in a moment after he hit me on the face such a blow. Blind with passion, I rushed on him—I struck furiously, recklessly at him, and in a moment afterwards was so excited by the spirit of the fight that danger and pain were forgotten, and all I desired was victory and revenge. Then the second round came—the same scene was repeated, only that I got my enemy's head under my arm, and before he could wrench it free, I had bled his nose and blackened his left eye. The third round was even more in my favour than the previous one, for the angry passions boiling within me made me strong, while my antagonist was apparently becoming rapidly exhausted, so that when a

cry was raised, "Here comes the bobbies!" I was on the edge of victory. Such a warning, however, is seldom disregarded by boys of my class, so principals and spectators fled with the most precipitate haste.

How ashamed I was when I got home! How I endeavoured, by keeping in the shade, to hide my bleeding nose and cut face from old Auntie! But it was no use, the old woman found it out, and peremptorily demanded the cause. With diffidence I told her the whole story, and instead of being scolded or punished by her, she bathed my wounds and consoled me with this advice:

"There's nothing I detests more than fighting; and if you had commenced it, or brought it on yourself, I'd have birched you as long as I could stand over you; but I don't want you to be put upon by anyone, but to stand your own like a man. It's agin human nature to expect otherwise. However, when you do have a mill, go honestly and squarely in for it, for it's one of those things that won't nohow stand doing by halves."

Now after reaching mature years, and thoroughly considering this piece of advice, I am decidedly of opinion that the old woman was right; and by her statement exhibited a knowledge of the world little to be expected from one in her circumscribed sphere. Possibly, if she had known more, she would have added, that preaching and politics required exactly the same earnestness.

For many a day after the above occurrences, nothing of particular note occurred to deserve mention. Six days a week I sold fusees, except when an odd job of a more remunerative nature turned up. The seventh day, however, I had for a holiday, and looked forward to its arrival with no small degree of pleasure, for in the season I used to spend the Sunday in the country, roaming about the lanes and hedgerows, or catching stickle-backs in the water-holes at the back of Lewisham, where clay for making bricks had been cut out.

I had returned from the latter sport, at which I had more than usual success. I gave one of

the fish to a companion, who wanted a pet, as he had an old jam-pot exactly suitable for keeping it in. However, it died. In a day or two after when I met him he said he would stand treat, so we went together and he bought a penn'orth of bull's-eyes. On inquiring how he was so flush of money, he told me.

“You see, there is a regular swell who lives over on Regent's Park side of London; he knows so much about fish that he can tell a fellow, by looking in his face, when he has had them for his breakfast. Now, if you can find a fish with two tails, or squint in its eye, he will pay any price to get possession of it. So, when the stickle-back died, I took a bone of the bloater mother had for dinner, and ran it through the stickle-back's gills and through its nose, and fixed it there so as you could not pull it forward or shove it back. You see, I had once seen a stuffed sword-fish, and thinks I to myself, if there be big ones of that kind, why should there not be little ones also? So I folded it up in a docking-leaf, and carried it up to the big man's house. After knocking for some time, a

boy in buttons at length opened the door. My pluck began to fail me when I was shown into a room filled with dead and living monkeys, red herrings, sprats in bottles, and big books, which I don't think were bibles, for they appeared too much used to be them. However, my courage came back when I saw a stout, round-faced-looking man in a flannel shirt sitting at a desk, smoking as ordinary a clay pipe as any ordinary man would smoke. However, he put on a lot of airs, and pretended he didn't see me, but kept on writing. At length, as I was beginning to feel kind of tired, something grabbed me by the leg, and when I looked down, blowed if it was not a monkey, about the size of a rabbit, with a tail as long as your arm, rigged in a green dressing-gown. With that I gives a kind of little scream, for I was startled. So the great fish-man takes the pipe from his mouth, sips at what I knew from the smell to be pretty strong gin-and-water, and asked me my business. At length I showed him what I had, and he examined it carefully, and asked me where I had got it. I wasn't green enough to tell him

that, but said somewhere else. At length he said,

“‘Thank you. It’s a beautiful specimen of the sword stickle-back, the——’ (Blowed if I can remember!—for it was a long jargon of foreign words of the ancients.)—‘The very, very thing that I have long been seeking for. Thank you, my boy. You need not wait. I’m much obliged—very.’

“Although he evidently expected me to go, I didn’t, but stood there, till at length, with a look of surprise, he inquired if I had anything more to say.

“‘Yes,’ says I. ‘Thanks won’t buy me grub. If you’re not willing to pay for that rare specimen, I knows a cove that will.’

“‘Oh! ah, yes—certainly,’ said he, and took from his pocket a couple of pence, which he held towards me.

“‘No, you don’t,’ says I. ‘Browns ain’t the kind of tin to suit my complaint. I see you doesn’t know the value of that harticle, so just hand it over. It’s as good as a bob to me any day of the week.’

"I was in mortal fear he'd take me at my word, but he didn't; so he gave me a shilling. Oh! how long it was before it left his fingers to fall into my hand! But when he had parted with the coin, and knew there was no recalling it, he made a virtue of necessity, and said that, deeming me a humble devotee of science, he was not aware that I expected a pecuniary reward.

" 'Very humble,' says I, and I left the room.

"On the staircase, before I reached the hall-door, the word devotee recurred to my memory. Not knowing what the meaning of such a foreign word was, and being no way favourably impressed with this fishy cove, I almost resolved to return and demand an explanation; but I made up my mind not to do so, on the ground that, if it turned out to have no wrong in it, my ignorance would be exposed. Moreover, there was a fellow in the next room whom he called Mr. Secretary."

I don't know whether, after this explanation, I should have ate any more of the bull's-eyes purchased by such doubtfully-obtained means,

but, having a sweet tooth, I could not see how I was morally responsible for my friend's conduct. I mentioned to him my doubts, but he soon thoroughly convinced me that I was wrong. His argument was this—

“The chap that bought the stickle-back is paid for knowing everything, and he don't, so he humbugs the whole population of this great country; while I only humbugged him. Have another bull's-eye, old pal?” says he, to wind up the argument; and I went in for another suck.

There was a billiard-room in the main street, close to Mill Lane. In the rattling of billiard-balls there has always appeared to me much pleasure. The frequenters of this establishment I had often seen, and from their being an unusually respectable, and, at the same time, jovial lot, with a character for liberality, their personal appearance was well known. Principal among them was one Jack. He could drink his grog like a man, and carry it like a gentleman. He was evidently popular with all, and no wonder, for he had a kind word for every-

one, and obviously felt a parental delight in seeing his juniors safely started on their way home after the house closed at night. "Now, Captain, are you coming?" or, "Lolly, the house is closing—time is up," were not unfrequently the words which had to be repeated very often before all could be paraded in the street.

Another of this clique was a brewer. Report said he had lots of money. Whether this was the case or not, he wore a sealskin vest that had long been my envy. Then there was the Captain—at least, he was familiarly called so—who thought he could play at billiards, when he couldn't. He was said to have many medals, which he had gained by fighting against every known nation, civilized or otherwise, and, according to report, had killed more wild beasts than there are black beetles in our kitchen, and that's saying something. Further, there was a brother to a champion of the board of green cloth, and a person who was always talking about blue rocks, a species of pigeon, which he would emphatically tell his listeners to back for

any amount of money, so that I used to think that he must be the richest man living. Occasionally another would join this group, who always came in a cab, remained to the last, and departed in the same vehicle. He invariably walked at the time to go home with an irresolute gait—a peculiarity he had doubtless acquired from having been a sailor; and as the deck, I am informed, is more paced during the middle watch than at any other time, custom caused him to roll more at the hour of the night when this watch commenced than at any other portion of the twenty-four.

I was watching these people as they took their departure one evening, and listening to some amusing chaff that was going on about a hat that had been sat on, and an anecdote about Private Joe, of the Yeomanry, having been ordered to fall out of the ranks for being drunk and incapable, when I saw a coin lying on the kerbstone. Altering my position, I placed my foot upon it, and remained standing over it, for I did not wish to attract attention by picking it up. At length the cab drove off, and

with it the others took their leave. Being alone, I secured the treasure, which, to my surprise—I may say fear—I found to be a sovereign. Here again was temptation thrown in my way. I had increased in strength physically, but had I morally? I fear not, for the constant struggle for life which I saw daily going on around me, and contact with persons who, from want of strength of mind, had already fallen, had certainly produced a deleterious influence upon me.

The night was dark, the street deserted—not even a footfall broke the silence of the hour. I gazed up and down and around, but not a living soul could I see. I therefore concluded that I might appropriate the money without fear of detection. I placed the prize carefully in the safest recess of my pocket, and turned to seek my home. I must admit that I felt rather nervous, and although I argued with myself on the absurdity of such an emotion, the still, small monitor within would whisper to me that the retention of this money was an act unworthy of my former life. But the

tempter had obtained possession of me, and I listened to the false reasoning by which he deluded me.

With so much money in my possession, do you think I slept? No, not for a moment. I turned and tossed from side to side upon my couch, till the grey dawn forced its uncertain light through the unshuttered window, and from every shadow, every recess, every nook in the room appeared fantastic figures, smiling, as I imagined, approval of my conduct, while others, equally indistinct, but who differed in shape from the former, seemed to grieve and weep for my fall. Kicking off my scanty bed-clothes, I sprang to my feet, and hurriedly dressed. Still undecided what to do with the money I had found, I wandered about the streets, the good and bad inclinations within me warring with each other, the latter invariably retaining the ascendancy.

At length the hour for breakfast arrived, and when I entered my home, I had concluded that I was honestly entitled to retain that which chance had thrown in my way.

All that forenoon I zealously guarded my secret, but in the evening, when chance threw me into the society of Mary Williams, I determined to take her into my confidence with regard to the wealth which I possessed. With childish delight she viewed the coin, and together we planned how it was to be spent. We agreed to share and share alike, neither to have more or less, and we laughed together over our anticipated pleasures.

But was my laugh sincere? No, it certainly was not, for the inward monitor still whispered to me that my conduct was wrong—that I had no right to the money which I was thus plotting to expend. The hilarity with which we were looking forward to our anticipated happiness was, however, of short duration, for my companion, looking me in the face, inquired, with the innocence of her childish nature, where and how I had got so much money? At first I avoided the question, and endeavoured to turn the conversation; but all my efforts to repel her curiosity on this point failed, and the question was again and again repeated. I thought

then of telling an untruth, but on a little consideration I soon saw how unworthy such a course would be. Moreover, I had the reputation of possessing a bad memory, and liars require a particularly good one.

“How did you get the money, Joe? Do tell me; for I know you would not steal it?” pleaded Mary; and the confidence she expressed in my honesty made me confess. “Found it, you say?” she continued—“well, it is not yours—you must not spend it—you won’t, will you, but seek for its owner? I’m certain you will.”

But I refused to listen to her advice, and expressed some annoyance that she had tendered it to me. We did not part, however, but walked together into the Broadway. There is a portion of this thoroughfare which is very wide, where the vendors of articles of every description which poor people require have their stands, and where the traffic is ever dense. It is a favourite locality too with open-air preachers, and on the evening in question a man was holding forth, in spite of the attempts

of a ragged crowd to drown his voice, the efforts of cheap John to attract customers, and the exertions of a ballad-singer, with a nasal twang, to dispose of his verses. With no other motive than that of enjoying the discomfiture of the persevering and energetic expounder of the truth, I and my companion elbowed our way into the crowd ; while a passing conveyance attracted the attention of many, and thus caused a temporary cessation of their ribald jests.

The preacher, availing himself of this temporary lull, raised his voice, and gazing earnestly into the throng, while his eyes appeared to look into mine with a penetrating gaze, under which I fairly cowered, raised his hand to add emphasis to his language, and uttered the words, "Thou shalt not steal;" repeating them several times in measured and distinct tones.

My companion's arm, which rested on mine, trembled ; and though for a moment I braced myself, I soon began to tremble too ; and to avoid listening to more which might be equally unpleasant, we both silently stole away. At

length, when we had gained a place free from observation, Mary turned to me and said,

“That man knows about your money—he does; and you will be imprisoned for having it.”

Although I believed that he did know, I argued with her that it was impossible; but the more we discussed the point, the weaker became my position, till I fairly broke down in my resolution to retain the money; so not wishing to be locked up, but to remain honest, I determined to use every effort to return it to its owner. Thus a chance occurrence saved me from taking a step which might have led downwards to a gulf from which I could never again emerge.

After all, it was well I allowed myself to be properly influenced, for although I did not find the owner, but was permitted to retain the sovereign, my apparent honesty procured me the friendship of the good-hearted sailor, who vowed he would send me to school, and make a man of me. It was after midnight, and he was leaning against a lamp-post close to where I had seen him on the first night I introduced

him to my readers, when he expressed himself so favourably impressed with my conduct. After having concluded his speech in reference to me, I was surprised to hear him ask the cabman to assist his friend inside. As there was no one present with him but cabby and myself, I could not understand to whom he alluded. After some delay, he again called out from the inside of the vehicle,

“Ain’t he coming, cabby?”

“All right,” replied that worthy; “the gentleman prefers riding on the box. Then, placing his head inside the conveyance, he continued, in a loud whisper, “He’s such a long one, that he prefers being where he can stretch his legs.”

As the cab drove off, it flashed upon me that my patrón must be drunk, and if so I could not help reflecting how much more amicable were his weaknesses when in this state than those of my neighbours in Mill Lane, for they wound up such frolics by licking their wives and children. “Ah! I see,” thought I, “this is the result of education.” So I determined to neglect no chance that offered of making myself a scholar.

This gentleman did become my patron, and sent me to school, where I learned rapidly to spell and to count. My progress, however, was not so much owing to my abilities as to the literary tendencies of the locality in which I lived, there being more big bills and posters stuck about Deptford, than any place I know of; and the large letters on them are capital things for teaching one his alphabet. A big circus bill, well covered with splendid drawings, makes a fellow so anxious to know what it is all about, that he never grudges the time it takes to spell it over; and to this, more than to the spelling-book, do I attribute the rapid strides which I made in my education.

At this time I relinquished the fusee business, which I had carried on after schooling hours were over; for, through the influence of Aunt, I obtained employment in the house of a person who, she affirmed, had once been a regular swell, but had become reduced in circumstances—partly, she asserted, through the goodness of his heart, and partly through unforeseen vicissitudes of fortune:

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These people—for they were two, the husband and wife—had always plenty to eat and drink, although they rarely or never appeared to have money in their pockets. So, although I seldom received my half-crown a week—the sum promised me for blacking the boots, cleaning the knives and forks, and running messages—still pay-day was only put off till their luck changed, while, in the meantime, I had as much food as I could eat; at the same time I will say I had a great longing for pocket-money, as my wardrobe was in a very shabby condition, and holes in your trousers, however advantageous they may be in Summer, are decidedly objectionable when the weather is cold, and the fag end of a Winter squall goes hide-and-seek up and down your legs—a feeling much less pleasant than that caused by a shock from the electric-battery that used to be highly patronized by many of the Mill Lane residents.



CHAPTER VII.

STORY CONTINUED—NEW APPLICATION OF AN OLD TEXT—
EDUCATION—THE GREATEST MISFORTUNE OF MY LIFE—THE
BOY IN BUTTONS—IN GREAT DISTRESS—A DISAPPOINTMENT
—THE GOOD SAMARITAN—AN ADMIRABLE TURN-OUT—
LORD BROADACRES—AUNT DRUDGE'S SICK-ROOM—A COM-
PARISON—DEATH OF A POOR WOMAN—REFLECTIONS IN
THE CHAMBER OF DEATH.



CHAPTER VII.

AFTER being in service a few months, an incident occurred in our family circle which proved how the experience of life assisted persons to accommodate themselves to circumstances. It was a bitter cold day, and the morning fire in the kitchen had consumed the last shovelful of coals; and, in consequence, when the master and mistress came down to breakfast, they decided to have that meal where it was cooked.

The want of fuel was freely discussed by them, and the necessity of immediately procuring some was felt; but how it was to be obtained was a point which required consideration, as neither had any money. No decision on this

important subject had been arrived at, when a large waggon of a coal-merchant stopped in front of the house. One of the men accompanying it knocked at the door, and handed the master a paper, at the same time making the inquiry if he should put them down the scuttle.

“Yes, certainly,” he said. “Here, Charlie,” turning to me, “go and unhook the scuttle.”

And the coals were soon tumbling in, sack after sack, while the master rubbed his hands, all the time expressing his satisfaction with their appearance, and affirming that they were the nicest nubbly ones he had ever looked at.

“Come here, Jenny,” says he to his wife; “just go and look over the garden walls, and see if you can borrow threepence from some of the neighbours, to give these hard-working honest fellows a pint of beer.”

The mistress went to do his bidding. All the coals were soon in, and the scuttle closed, when a book was sent down for master’s signature. This was returned to its owner with the information that, not finding his name or address in

its pages, he was sorry he could not accommodate them.

"Then your name is not Mr. Smith?" asked one of the waggoners.

"No, it isn't, nor nothing so common," indignantly replied my employer.

"Well, the coals are not for you," continued the first speaker.

"Are they not?" replied master.

"And we must have them back," retorted the other.

"So you shall, my man. Charles, go and open the scuttle again; for I cannot have my house turned upside down through the ignorance of you men. Take them back every piece of them—you don't think I want your coals; and, Charles, look here, just go into the kitchen and fetch them a pair of tongues to pick them out with."

With a slam and a hasty oath both men departed. My master walked into the sitting-room, ordered a large fire to be lighted there at once, and then, throwing himself into a chair, pointed out to me how grieved he was to think

that, through their incivility, these fellows had lost their threepence (for his wife had succeeded in borrowing that sum), which amount was forthwith entrusted to my care, to obtain a pint of six ale, as my master required some stimulant after his late exertions. When I returned soon after with the beer, I heard the good man exclaiming to himself, "How inscrutable are the ways of Providence, and what nubbly ones they are!" The very identical words I had heard a sermon preached from were the early part of his expression; but until then I was unaware that it was applicable to nubbly coals.

So time passed on, and the longer I lived I became more worldly, less particular in my respect for moral obligations, and more thoroughly convinced that life was a struggle, in which a large portion of the world did not scruple to carry out their purposes by means not always compatible with those ideas of honesty which I believed all should possess. In fact, I began to fear that the world was in a great measure made up of rogues and fools, and that both were to be found in every class.

Soon after the occurrence of the coal affair, my employer—for he was a popular man, and regularly attended church—obtained a remunerative appointment, and being desirous that his establishment should be suitable to his means, I was discharged, and a substitute for me was found in a more eligible person, a boy in buttons, who had seen a great deal of good society, having carried around to the patients of his late master, the doctor, the medicines which he had prescribed for them.

Doubtless I should only have been a short time idle, but unfortunately I received no character on dismissal, the cause of this omission being that I insisted on payment of arrears of wages, which my master pronounced an evidence of base ingratitude, seeing that while I resided with him I had always had my meals regularly, and the benefit of his good advice and example.

I was now able to read and write, and possessed a tolerable knowledge of accounts; but I did not find, at this period of life, that education was as useful to me as I had expected it

would be. Moreover, it increased my expenditure, for I felt there was a blank in my week when I did not read the *Police Gazette*, or other equally entertaining periodicals, none of which it was in my power to obtain without purchase, and twopence or threepence a week for the supply of food for the mind was no insignificant item to one who was neither in receipt of a regular salary, nor the possessor of a settled income.

On reaching the age of fifteen, the heaviest misfortune of my life occurred. Poor old Aunty, who had long been ailing, suddenly became so ill that she was confined to her bed, and her support devolved entirely upon me, who had been unable to obtain employment. It was very little the poor old woman required, but, from her age and infirm state, I knew full well that that little must be good; so I sat by the fire pondering over my position, and reflecting on the means by which I might be able to provide for old Aunty, of whom I thought more than of myself. Money I must obtain—but how was I to get it? I scratched my head, and

thought, then thought and scratched my head, a process in which there is certainly something, for I never do it but it makes me more lively. Still, for once in my life, I was puzzled. At length I hit upon an idea—to go to my late master, and beg him to give me at least a trifling portion of the sum he owed me. I reached the house, rang the bell, and had to wait a long and trying interval before it was opened, my mind ranging all the time between the extremes of hope and fear. When in this uncertain state, I chanced to turn round and glance at the window which was next me. Through an aperture between the blinds I saw an eye, one look at which was sufficient to tell me it belonged to the person I sought. When the door was at length opened, my successor in office only kept it sufficiently ajar to be able to answer my inquiry.

“Tell the master that I wish to speak to him,” I said.

“He ain’t at home,” was the response I received.

“But I have just seen him,” I continued.

"Then I'm a liar," exclaimed the boy in buttons, as he attempted to slam the door in my face; but I was too quick for him, and with my foot prevented the accomplishment of his purpose, for I was desperate when I remembered gradually dying Aunty, and her wants, which I was unable to alleviate.

"Come, there's a kind fellow," I added, "do ask the master to see me. I'm in great distress, and I want so very much to speak to him."

"It's as much as my place is worth, so take away your foot—do, when I ask you," he answered entreatingly.

"No, I will not till I see him," I said, with such emphasis as left no room for doubt; and as I finished the last speech, an angry voice was heard demanding what the young scoundrel wanted.

"Ah, I see, to induce you to leave the hall, that he may have a chance of purloining the coats and umbrellas."

As this speech reached its termination, I was confronted by its utterer.

"How dare you, sir, attempt to force your

way into my premises?—how dare you, I say? But I will see if a respectable law-abiding citizen and ratepayer is thus to be insulted. If there's a policeman to be obtained, which I very much doubt, I will put an end to this attempted act of intimidation," and my late master came upon the porch and earnestly gazed up and down, as if searching for the minion of the law.

"You wrong me, sir, from beginning to end. I did not desire to annoy you; but pray listen to me," I pleadingly urged.

"Listen to you, sir! a young scamp come in a spirit of braggadocio to insult me; or, from being hardened in crime to commit a most audacious robbery in the unprotected house of a respectable citizen."

With the tears running from my eyes I pleaded to be heard, telling him that she who was my only tie on earth was dying and in want, that a few shillings, even one, would be of inestimable service to me, and that my everlasting gratitude would be gained by his listening to my supplication. But all was of no avail; the hard-hearted man turned upon me, and ex-

pressed his assurance that Providence had placed this judgment upon me, "for the way of the transgressor is hard."

"In a few days, when you feel in a proper spirit," he continued, "you may return and I will listen to what you have to say," and the door was closed with a bang.

As I turned from the house to return to the sick-bed of the only friend I had ever known, I could not help muttering to myself, "who knows but that death will have performed his mission ere the time has elapsed which I am ordered to wait before I can obtain my own." I was wild, desperate, mad, at the injustice I suffered, and I, who had never willingly injured anyone, almost swore war against my race.

When I reached my humble home, I felt an altered person. Envy of the rich, and hatred for those that were better off than myself, struggled within me for the mastery over all my better feelings; but as I opened the door and entered the room, sentiments of love and devotion took their place, for peace and tranquillity reigned around the invalid. A glance

told me some kind spirit had been there during my absence, and in a moment I knew all. Poor little Mary Williams had pawned her boots, and with the money thus procured obtained several little necessities so desirable in a sick-room. I have often heard it said that the poor are callous and without heart, from their constant struggles with adversity; but the reverse I am sure is more frequently the case.

For hours I sat by the sick-bed, brooding moodily over the hardness of my lot; for although but a child in years, I knew that the time was near at hand when the only friend I possessed on earth was about to be called away. I could see no break in the dark clouds of misfortune which darkened all my prospects, and sincerely did I wish that I could leave this earth with the spirit of old Aunty, and journey with it to the unknown and better land.

The sun was setting, and the last roseate tinges of light were streaming into our chamber, when a noiseless step entered the room, and I raised my head to see who the intruder was. When I was satisfied on this point, I relapsed

into my former gloomy state, but I was not permitted to brood any longer. Poor little Mary (for it was she) threw her arms around me, and pleaded so earnestly that I would not give way, that a gush of tears came to my eyes, and unrestrained flowed freely, an example which she, gentle creature, followed. This cry brought relief to my overwrought feelings. The result, however, was that I was coaxed to go out and get the fresh air; which I unwillingly consented to do, though not until my young companion had promised to remain where she was during my absence.

Crossing Deptford Bridge, and turning into the Greenwich Road, I was attracted by a crowd, towards which I pushed my way. I soon discovered that it was caused by a drag and four, which, through a choke in the traffic, had been compelled to come to a halt. The detention was more than the well-bred horses were inclined to submit to, and each leader required a man at its head to prevent its plunging or kicking over the traces. I gazed with admiration upon the perfectly turned-out equi-

page, and upon the well-dressed persons that were upon it. Among them I recognised Lord Broadacres. Could I but speak to him, would he remember me? "I will try, at all events," I said, though the task appeared hopeless. At length I thought of the card which he had given me so many years since, and which I still possessed; for I had wrapped it in paper, and secreted it in the corner of my hat, where I retained it as if it were a treasure. To extract it from its hiding-place was the work of a moment, and in another instant I thrust it into its original owner's hand. He received it with surprise and uncertainty, glanced at his name, then looked at me, and asked who I was. In hurried and earnest words I said something about the Trafalgar and his accident, when a smile crossed his features, and making a hurried excuse to his next companion, he descended with a light, active spring to the pavement.

"And what can I do for you?" he inquired.

"Save my only friend on earth from death, for she is starving," I replied.

"Is this true that you state?" he asked.

“It is, on my life.”

“Then I will follow you, and see for myself—lead the way.”

As we threaded the crowded thoroughfare towards my home, I felt prompted to turn round and assure myself that my steps were followed by my lord, but I resisted doing so, as I felt it would evince distrust of his sincerity. So, persistently looking in front, I pursued my course, till at length our door was reached. The darkness after the outer door was crossed was such at night that no one ignorant of the passages could thread them without assistance. I halted, therefore, and explaining the reason, took his lordship's soft gloved hand in mine, and he followed me, without evincing any distrust or suspicion of my honesty, to our poor room.

On a table beside the scantily-covered bed burned a rushlight, the insignificant flame of which filled the apartment with an uncertain light, obscured occasionally by dark shadows. The invalid reposed motionless on the bed, and by her side, seated in a chair, and wrapped in

slumber, was little Mary. We both halted in the centre of the empty room. My companion, drawing himself up to his full height, and gazing earnestly for some moments, exclaimed, "What a picture for the brush of an artist!"

At length poor sick Aunt opened her weary eyes, and becoming aware of our presence, gazed in surprise; while Mary Williams, diffident and uncomfortable, tried to squeeze herself into the smallest possible space, or behind any object that promised the slightest concealment.

"You have told me the truth, my boy," said our visitor; "but I am not a physician, and it appears to me that one is wanted. I will send my doctor here the first thing in the morning, and in the meantime take this," placing money in my hand. "Being of no further use, I will not remain. Possibly I may have time to catch my associates, for the road was so obstructed, that it must have required some time to remove the impediments in the way of our team."

Then I re-took his hand, and led him back as he had entered. When we gained the street,

he said, "Good night; you are more required at home than piloting me," and waved his hand with kindness and decision. I watched his receding figure as he departed, but the throng of people passing shut him out from my view in a minute, and I felt that a gulf again separated me from one of the few who had ever shown me kindness.

What a contrast was this nobleman's conduct to that of my late master, who in the morning had refused to listen to my supplication, or to do me the barest justice in paying the money which he owed me! Yet this man was never so much in his glory as when expatiating on the faults of the heartless aristocracy; and to listen to him when on his favourite hobby one would have supposed the nobles of the land were a race without heart or sympathy—harpies produced to prey upon the poor, and remorselessly to rob them of their pitiful earnings. Experience has since taught me that this is a course adopted by many similar unprincipled persons, though, if they should themselves rise to eminence or wealth, they are only too ready

to forget their former opinions, and fawn upon the great and powerful possessors of titles.

With more luxuries in my possession than ever entered our poor dwelling previously, paid for out of the liberal sum Lord Broadacres had given me, I returned to Aunty's sick-bed. She still lay in a half unconscious state, and I longed anxiously for her to wake, so that I might have the pleasure of seeing her partake of them. My impatience would have led me to disturb the invalid, but my little companion, so much better suited for such a task from her patience and consideration, prevented my doing so.

Thus time fled on, and the silence was only broken by an occasional deep-drawn sigh that came from the bosom of the sufferer, but which at length ceased, and we both thought, with pleasure, that rest, unbroken by pain, had come to her relief. And it was so, but in a different way from what we supposed, for the spark of life had fled—the soul had winged its way to the spirit-land, and only the body remained, to be returned to the earth, of which it was composed. But neither knew this, nor for a

moment thought that we were in the presence of the dead, till, my patience becoming exhausted, I gently drew the sheet back, so as to look upon the loved and now haggard features. Alas! why did I feel spell-bound as I looked into the once familiar eyes, now void of that light of kindness which had once illuminated them, and so dissimilar to what they were, as I had formerly seen them. The gaze was now fixed without lustre or expression. Placing my hand on the clear white forehead, I recoiled from the touch, for there was something unearthly in it—something which affected me in a way I cannot describe.

“Mary, come here. Is Auntie dead?” I said to my companion; and the words clung to my mouth as if they refused to be uttered.

“No, no—she cannot be dead,” said Mary; “death comes not thus, I am told; there are, I have heard, fearful and relentless struggles before death gains the mastery over the living.”

“But Auntie moves not, nor does she breathe,” I exclaimed.

“Still,” said Mary, “she is not dead—it can-

not be!" And she endeavoured to take one of the hands from under the coverlet, but she recoiled from it. We gazed long and earnestly at one another, but said nothing, for neither could find words to express the feelings that were dominant. At length Mary whispered, in a subdued, soft voice,

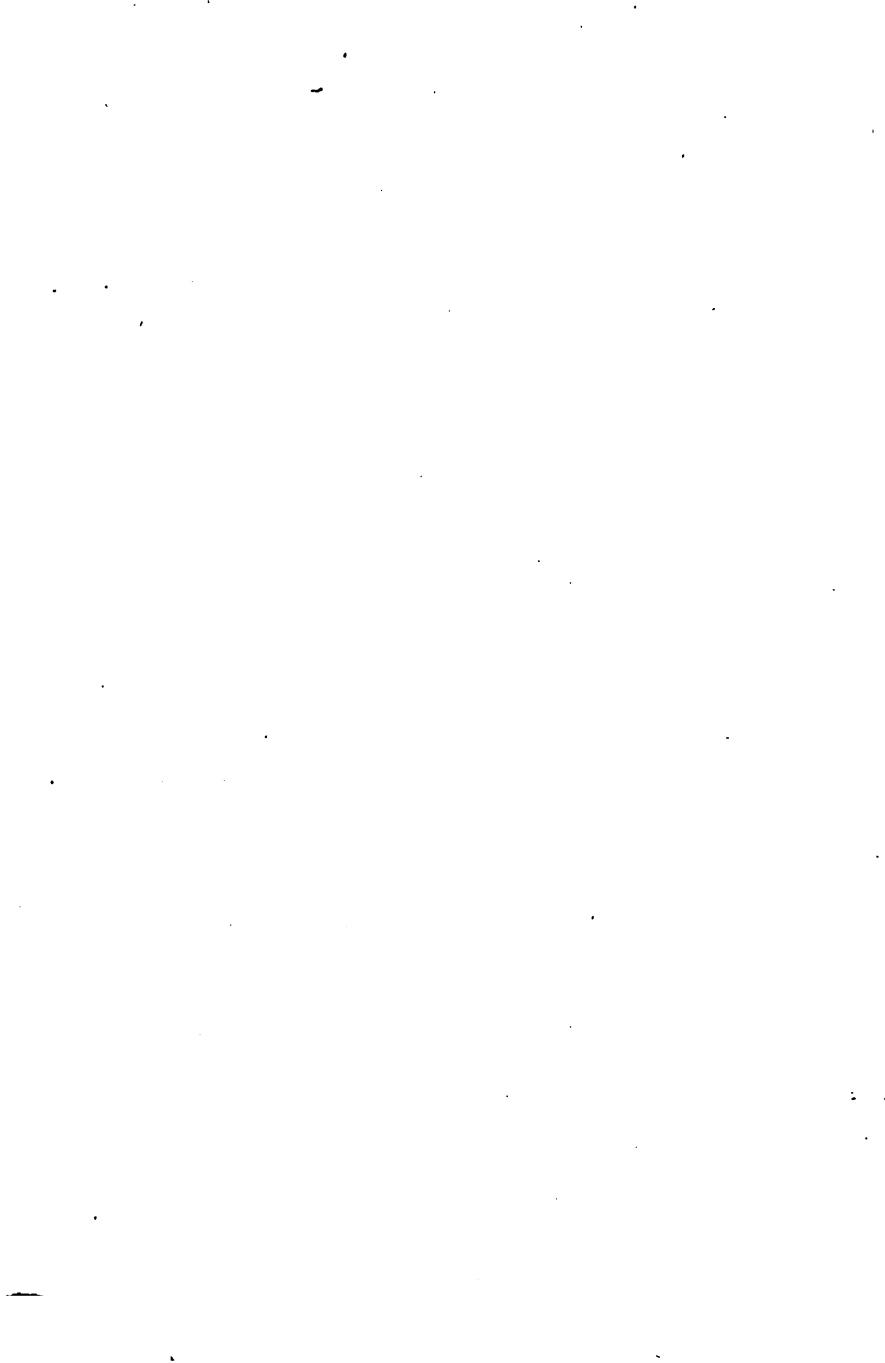
"It is so—she is dead; but it is not the death I've heard of, for there is nothing more fearful in this than in untroubled sleep."

"How I wish I slept that sleep!" I responded, "in which we may find a rest from all our troubles."

The wind, I thought, that night, sighed through the house more plaintively than it usually did, and the sounds were more distinct and plaintive. At length I started as I thought I heard a voice, and my companion did the same.

"It is the angels," she said, with childlike faith, "taking her home."

Of angels I had heard; that they were too good for earth, I believed. So I took my friend by the hand, and we left the house, thinking that where they were was not the place for us.



CHAPTER VIII.

HOUSELESS AND HOMELESS—MY FAREWELL TO MARY—LONDON
BRIDGE—LORD BROADACRES ABROAD—THE DOCKS—A
FRIEND WHO COULD PUT ME UP TO A THING OR TWO—
DISAGREEABLE EMPLOYMENT—A MUTINOUS CREW—AMERI-
CAN BRAGGADOCIO—THE RECRUITING SERGEANT—MISERIES
OF AN EMIGRANT SHIP—UNEXPECTED RECOGNITION—AC-
QUISITION OF FORTUNE—MY MARRIAGE.



CHAPTER VIII.

THE doctor came next morning, and the funeral followed some days afterwards. I was now houseless and homeless, for I could not live alone where everything recalled the loss I had suffered.

At first I hung about the neighbourhood, and slept where I could, for many commiserated with me, and were kind, as far as lay in their means; but Mary's mother liked me not, and I was denied the happiness of her society. We met at length one evening to take farewell of each other, for I had been forbidden ever again to speak to her, because her mother said I was a low-bred, common fellow, without a good drop

of blood in my veins, which was not the case with her daughter. We sat upon a broken brick wall together, while the moon shone on some neighbouring ruins.

"I am going to leave you, and for ever, Mary," I said, "unless I succeed in bettering myself, when I will come back for you. I cannot remain here, seeing you, but not allowed to talk to you, for you are the only one left on earth that I love. So I go, I know not where, but I will ever remember you."

"Don't go," she murmured.

"But I must."

So I kissed her cheek, which was cold as marble, while her hands trembled in mine. In a moment more I felt I should be unmanned, and therefore left her, hurrying away, never thinking in what direction I turned my steps. At midnight I stood upon London Bridge.

Long and earnestly I gazed into the river, the surface of which reflected numerous sparkling lights, which seemed to invite me to rest. If I had been penniless I might have accepted that invitation; but some of my benefactor's

gift still remained, and thrusting my hand involuntarily into my pocket, the touch of my treasure recalled the memory of the giver. I will seek him on the morrow; in the morning I will direct my steps to the West-end, I resolved.

How long is the night to one who is wearily waiting for its termination!—and that portion of the Summer day which precedes the hours when the business of life commences seems almost as long. I had been seated some time on a bench below a tree behind St. James's Palace. The monotonous pace of the sentry lulled me to sleep, and forgetting my desolate position and overwhelming troubles, my fancy wandered in the highly-coloured realms of dreamland. The craving of the body for rest was thus satisfied, and I arose refreshed and invigorated. In due time I set off for Belgrave Square, but when I reached it the house was closed. My ring, however, was answered by an old woman, from whom I learned that his lordship had gone abroad, but no one knew where or how long he should be away. So I turned to leave, resolv-

ing that I also would seek some other clime, for every country was now alike to me, and none could be more inhospitable than my own.

Strange to say, with this resolution my spirits returned, and my walk and movements were no longer listless and aimless, for I felt I had a purpose, and with it I recovered the strength and energy to carry it out.

Determining to waste no more time uselessly, I went by a penny steamer to London Bridge, whence I pushed down to Wapping, and on through the docks, in which big ships and little ones, steamboats and sailing-vessels, lay jammed together. To work these vessels at sea, or unload them in port, men were necessary, and among such numbers as so many ships must require, surely I stood a fair chance of employment. But my inexperience again led me into error, for disappointment followed all my endeavours to procure work. "You are a land-lubber, you are too old, or too young, without character, never been at sea before," were the objections urged against my applications; and although not very clever, I could not understand how

one person could possess such antagonistic points of objection.

Believing that I was on the right course, and hoping that the morrow might bring success, I determined to have supper and enjoy a good night's rest. I soon found a place where I could satisfy my modest wants, but the number of its patrons almost induced me to search elsewhere. I did not, however, and the result was that I made an acquaintance who said that, if I stuck to him, he could put me up to a thing or two. True to this promise, I was introduced on the morrow to a stevedore, who placed me upon the strength of his force, employed in unloading grain from some Baltic ships. This occupation I found so far from enjoyable that I was soon driven to seek other work, which fortunately I found without difficulty.

An American emigrant ship which lay in the river, but was to proceed to sea in a few days, being reported short of hands, I sought and obtained a berth on board as cook's assistant; and, as my services were not required until the passengers had embarked, I had in the meantime

little or nothing to do. I wandered about, therefore, from night till morning, and was seldom on board except at the time when the meals were served. The crew of this vessel were a rough, mutinous lot, and the bad feelings which were openly manifested between officers and seamen excited reasonable fears of discord and mutiny when we got away from port. They were moreover as heterogeneous an assemblage as you could find—Spaniards, French, and Italians; but the worst of all were three Americanised Irishmen, who were never sober when they could be drunk, hated my countrymen with an antipathy which it was impossible to eradicate, and never lost an opportunity of showing me their ill-will.

Another amiable weakness that they possessed was a desire to force down every one's throat the idea that America was the best and greatest country under the sun, and that "ould Ireland" was destined to be ere long in every way her equal. Being scarcely sufficiently read on these matters to form any judgment, I did not dare to oppose their assertions, though I

thought a great deal, for I had always been previously told that England was, beyond comparison, superior to all other lands—that one Englishman was, physically and morally, equal to three Frenchmen, or an indefinite number of men of other nations; and that her seamen and soldiers had but to make their appearance against a foe, and breathe the name of their birthplace, when, panic-stricken, the enemy would take to flight.

When I heard statements which called in question the truth of these impressions, my first idea was that these men were attempting to contradict what I had always regarded as a self-evident truth. I should have liked to dispute with either of these three Yankee Irishmen, but I was still young, and by no means their match. When I reached maturity, however, I should have power to meet any man, I hoped; and I would always be ready to stand up for my country against either Yankees or Frenchmen.

Such exaggerated ideas as these on the greatness of my native land, and the respect

and awe it was held in abroad, I had learned from listening to the recruiting sergeant for Deptford district. As he possessed four medals, there could be no doubt that he was qualified to be accepted as an authority. His remarks, however, were never addressed to me, but to persons my seniors in age, into whose society I forced myself, when they were listening to the inducements offered to them to enlist.

“Why, sir,” he said one day, in answer to an inquiry made by some of the admiring audience that stood around listening to his words, “am I not an officer? I might have been one a dozen times at least—in fact, it was only the other day that the Commander-in-Chief called me on one side, and said,

“‘Sergeant, we must put you in the *Gazette*—you are depriving the country too long of your valuable services.’

“But I replied—mind you, perfectly respectfully,

“‘General, I would prefer your not urging me on this point. You know, sir, officers can’t live on their pay; and my parents, or my

own carefulness, have not feathered my nest.'

" 'Well, my good fellow,' he rejoined, 'I suppose we must submit to your decision.'

"Of course in so many years of service I have made myself a reputation." Here the gallant man slapped his bosom. "If you doubt my word," he continued, "look at the annals of our Army at the Horse Guards."

No one doubted this fact, for it was apparent; and I am certain they would have been afraid to do so, for the gallant sergeant looked as if he were willing then and there to fight an army single-handed. However, the placid smile returned to his face, and he continued,

"It was at the battle of Ferroze that I first made the General's acquaintance. We were placed in a hollow, with the surrounding heights commanding our position, and showers of bullets dropped into our ranks; but our brave boys stood their ground, the General cautioning them to retain their fire, put their trust in him, and only hold their rifles straight. At length he said to me,

" 'Sergeant, isn't time up now?'

“‘In a few minutes more, General,’ I replied.

“Just five minutes after my opinion was asked, the bugle sounded the charge, and we walked through ranks of the enemy backwards and forwards, backwards and forwards, till we had killed three times the number of all our force, besides taking twice as many prisoners. You see, my lads, an army of English soldiers is equal any day to three, five, even ten times their number. Come, now, if you wish to be gentlemen, to enjoy life, and to live on the fat of the land, take the Queen’s shilling, and your memory of doing so will never blister. I’m thirsty—some more beer, my dear—old and bitter. Not you, my love,’ addressing the barmaid—‘the mixture of malt, I allude to. Yes, my lads, it’s a different thing on service—claret, sack, port, champagne—those are what we drink, and that without having to pay, or say thank you in return.”

Now, after having listened to such a eulogy on military life and the prowess of my countrymen, the bright dream I had nursed of Eng-

land's greatness, adopted from an authority that everyone would say was undeniable, was ruthlessly broken by the ci-devant Irishmen; it was cruel—it was more to destroy my belief in our bravery.

I cannot say that I had the slightest feeling of grief as the time approached for my departure from my native land. My position could not be worse, therefore any change must be for the better; and I had only one friend to regret, it was little Mary.

At last we dropped down the river, in fog and mist and smoke. Our decks were crowded to excess, and everything was in disorder; misery seemed to reign paramount, and brutality and blasphemy to be the prominent characteristics of the ship's officers. Oh! the miseries of an emigrant ship! Who that has not experienced them can imagine the sufferings which they must endure?—the indignities that the poor creatures, both male and female, who are seeking a new home, are subjected to by the crews of such vessels? But, thank goodness! there was an end to the long, tedious, monotonous

forty-five days that intervened between losing sight of fog-clothed England and gaining the first glimpse of sunny America.

The brilliant light in which the new land was clothed augured, in my eyes, success ; and I prospered from the moment I landed. The first place at which I applied for work was a furnishing establishment in the Bowery. The master wanted just such a person as myself, and I was at once installed into office. My duties were to go with the other employés to hotels and private dwellings, to hang curtains and lay down carpets. I had scarcely been at work two months when I was sent to one of the principal hotels, to measure some rooms for new carpeting ; in one of these whom should I recognise but Lord Broadacres, my old friend ! He also knew me, and in an hour afterwards he engaged me to attend him on a journey he proposed making through the western country. A year afterwards his Lordship returned home, and I remained in America, for in his service I had saved a considerable sum.

With this money I went into the coal-oil

region, where I became partner in a small but flourishing hotel. Excellent opportunities for speculation were frequently offered me. These I availed myself of, and success crowned each of my enterprises, till, in a couple of years, I found myself possessed of a fortune, the amount of which surprised me. But this was in no way wonderful; I can mention dozens that have been equally fortunate. In fact, I believe that, at one time, Petroleum Centre and the surrounding portions of the oil regions, produced more wealth than the gold mines of California or Australia.

The poor boy that left home as cook's assistant in an emigrant ship, returned a few years afterwards to his own land as a cabin-passenger in the *Scotia*—and for what purpose, think you? To seek out Mary Williams, and make her my wife. In this, too, I succeeded. As my interests and money are all invested in America, I have adopted it for my home and that of my children; not because I love the old country less, but the new one more. Although I do this, you must not suppose that I am in-

fluenced in my decision by any of the levelling heresies that are prevalent in the present day; for, as long as I live, I shall believe that the man of birth and education is generally nobler in character and aspirations, than those born in a humbler sphere; and I feel convinced that I owe all my prosperity to the noble gentleman who first took me by the hand.

This story is not told exactly as it was narrated, but it is founded on a sketch sent me by the hero of it, with permission that I might use it if in the narrative I suppressed the names of the actors, or substituted fictitious appellations for the real ones. It forms on the whole an extraordinary instance of the downs and ups that some persons experience in life; and as such I have given it, though I fear that some of my readers will be sceptical on its truth. If so, I have only to remind them of the old and true adage, that "truth is often stranger than fiction."

CHAPTER IX.

VISIT TO WASHINGTON—GENERAL GRANT—VOYAGE TO CRISFIELD—HOSPITALITY TO STRANGERS—BALTIMORE FROM THE HARBOUR—LOCUST POINT—RAILWAY FREIGHT DEPÔT—DENVER—ST. LOUIS—CINCINNATI—FORT CARROL—DISGRACEFUL CONTRACTS—DISAPPOINTED OFFICE-SEEKERS—PROFFERED HOSPITALITY—TURMOIL AT CRISFIELD.



CHAPTER IX.

WISHING to visit some old acquaintances at Washington, and the journey there being one of trifling distance from Baltimore, I determined to run over. When I was in the former city the streets were almost impassable for mud; and in Summer it suffers from an equally disagreeable complaint, clouds of dust. As some years, however, had elapsed since my previous visit to the capital of the United States, I was not surprised to find it greatly increased in size, very much improved in appearance, while the bustle and confusion that then reigned paramount had been, in a great measure, got rid of. Washington, in the time I speak of, was truly a stirring place, and those who lived in it were kept in a constant state of excite-

ment; for it was crowded with raw and newly-levied troops, and a few miles off was a hostile army, which, as Dame Rumour daily informed us, was on its way to attack the city. Those days of strife and turmoil, however, are now gone, and all that remains to remind the inhabitants of those times of alarm and agitation is the distinguished officer who is now chief magistrate of the United States.

Before General Grant became President I had spoken to him several times, possibly not sufficiently long for him to remember the circumstance. Still, having done so, I was very curious to see how he wears and bears his honours. To gratify my curiosity, I found my way, to the neighbourhood of the White House, at the hour when it is fashionable for the celebrities of Washington to drive. There I was not long detained in suspense, for in a very short time a spanking team of trotters, that could do their mile in far less time than three minutes, rattled past me; while behind them sat the General; with that cool, imperturbable countenance, which never seems to lose for a mo-

ment its calm, unimpassioned expression. Of ordinary height, broad-shouldered, and possessing a strongly-knit frame, the General must have been capable, in youth, of standing immense fatigue; but there is nothing about his physiognomy, or the expression of his eye, that denotes talent. Assuming to myself the capacity to form an estimate of character from appearances, I should say that he was far more calculated to gain distinction as Colonel of a regiment than as a General commanding an army. In fact, he has the appearance of a man who would fight to the last, and never acknowledge himself beaten; but there are no indications of that genius for command which would enable him to plan brilliant manoeuvres, to direct a masterly advance, or, a still more difficult task, to conduct a skilful retreat.

General Grant has been one of the most fortunate men of any age. His brilliant staff made his reputation in the West; his unlimited supply of men and resources enabled him to assert superiority in the East. He became head of the army at a time when it had reached its greatest

numerical strength, and when the country had commenced to cry out against the interference with the troops, so disastrously practised, during the previous period of the contest, by the civil officials at Washington. The *bonne camaraderie*, also, for which he was distinguished, made him popular among the citizen soldiers of a Republican army.

On his return to the White House I had a better look at him, and I must acknowledge he seems to have worn well, the troubles of the ship of state having made so little impression upon him, that he seems, if anything, to look younger, an appearance which may be made more manifest by the fact that he now pays more attention than formerly to his apparel. A more remarkable instance of the sudden rises in life which it is the lot of some people to make is not to be found in the annals of any country or time. The son of a tanner in a small western town; a few years since an estate agent, with a far from prosperous business, and till recently a person of no means or distinction, he is now President over one of the greatest nations of the earth.

As the season was rapidly advancing to the time when the wild-fowl migrate to the north, I determined to hurry off and pay a final visit to Devil's Island and Dame's Quarter. A few hours by rail brought me once more to Baltimore, where I found all my necessities ready for use. Let me here do an act of justice. If any person should come thus far for sport, let them entrust their orders for ammunition to Messrs. Poultney and Trimble, and they will find that their confidence in this obliging firm is not misplaced, provided the visitors receive the treatment—and I have no doubt but they will—kindly awarded to me.

As I had found the railroad connecting Crisfield and Wilmington a most primitive affair, travelling a large proportion of its route so slow as not to exceed the pace of a good pedestrian, while dust as thick as a London fog almost obscured your fellow-passengers, even when so near to you that you might touch them with your umbrella. In fact, it had so many drawbacks that it formed anything but a pleasant route. I resolved, therefore, to go to

Crisfield by the good steamship *Maggie*, which left Baltimore at 5 P.M., twice a week, for her round trip down the bay, when she called at something like a dozen ports ere she returned to her original starting-place.

I dined at Mr. Ballard's restaurant in the afternoon, and he, like a good kind fellow as he is, promised to see me off, and introduce me to the captain and purser of the vessel. In a short sail of ten or twelve hours, no one at home would think there was any necessity for making these gentlemen's acquaintance; but here it is different. An intimacy with the captain, or any occasional notice of a passenger taken by him, immediately gives you a standing of position among your fellow travellers, and produces a desire among them to make your acquaintance, and show you attention; while the purser will see that you obtain not only a comfortable berth, but a good seat at table during meals, and order the stewards to treat you with more than ordinary courtesy.

I got on board quite half an hour before sailing, and Mr. Ballard discovered among the pas-

sengers who were going down the bay several members of the State Legislature, politicians, and place hunters, by all of whom he was known, and to their care I was confided. And well did these gentlemen perform their task, for until the hour for retiring to rest, one or other of them kept me company, and their supplies of drinkables, cigars, &c., were immediately placed at my service. In fact, if they had permitted me to consume any of my own, these hospitable people would have regarded themselves as guilty of a breach of that law which makes it incumbent on them to show kindness to the stranger in their land.

Before the *Maggie* left the dock, and Mr. Ballard had landed, it was considered important, as we were then all together, and few minutes more would deprive us of one of the party, that we should go and take a drink. To such a reasonable request there was no demurring, so all adjourned to take a "smile;" and we continued "smiling" till the deep-toned steam-whistle warned us that the hawsers were being taken in. Even then, before my host left, it

was thought the correct thing by some one that all should light a fresh cigar as a finish to our little reunion. This also was done, but the time that was lost in the operation rendered it imperative on those who were going ashore to make a race down the companion, and a jump over the bulwarks, to avoid being carried off, for already we were in motion.

Baltimore looks better from the harbour and bay than from any other point of observation I have discovered ; for notwithstanding the bad paving of the streets, the irregular architecture of the public buildings, and the diversified appearance of the houses, a very pleasant *tout-ensemble* is formed, when thus massed, particularly when fronted with the water. At first we had to move very slowly, for the *Maggie* is a large vessel, and her way was through a labyrinth of shipping, the principal of which were pongies and two or three-masted schooners.

We soon shaved Locust Point, where the large and handsome transatlantic vessels of the German Lloyds wharve. Their decks and storehouses are commodious, and well suited to their

purpose; while the bustle and activity always observed here denote the prosperity of the company. At the back of these wharves is the principal freight dépôt of the Baltimore and Ohio line, an immense place, cut up by innumerable tracks, and crowded with cars of every description, from the handsome palace sleeping carriage to the black and battered coal-truck. If the passer-by had time to examine them closely, he would observe painted on the upper portion of their side the names of the places to which they go—Denver, St. Louis, Chicago, Cincinnati, and Omaha being among the most familiar, all mixed in the greatest possible confusion.

What space will the recollection of the traveller pass over as he reads these names! I see in imagination all the grog-houses, gambling-hells, shanties, and mushroom buildings that characterize Denver, at one time the centre of the silver mining region, now a stopping-place on the Atlantic and Pacific line of railroad. Then St. Louis, with its broad river and smoky atmosphere, its fleet of steam-

boats and busy streets, passes before me. That ocean of fresh water, Lake Michigan, and the queen city of the west, with its giant elevators and immense hotels, give way to the muddy Ohio, with Cincinnati and its mammoth suspension-bridge, the city sunk, as it were, in the bottom of a basin, while sterile yellow hills form its boundary. Jumping a thousand miles or more to the west, there is Omaha, bright and new, prosperous and energetic, which ten years back was almost the centre of a wilderness.

Truly America is a wonderful country, for in half a century it has built cities that rival in population those of ten times their age in other lands, and emulate in the magnitude of their commerce the most enterprising of the world.

After Locust Point is passed, we perceive the barracks containing the garrison—a pretty, green place, with nice-looking officers' quarters, and commodious accommodation for the men; while well-kept and trim-looking batteries margin the water. On either shore we see wood-

land and cultivated land, pleasantly interspersed among each other, without any regard to order ; still none the less pretty on that account. And occasionally from amid the trees peep forth pretty cottages or handsome houses, all looking trim and bright, from their snow-white walls and emerald-green blinds and verandahs. In front of us looms a giant monster of a building—a cross between a bastille and an overgrown lighthouse. It is called Fort Carrol, cost I am afraid to say how much money, and is reported to be perfectly useless for the purpose intended—viz., to defend the harbour of Baltimore. Of its capabilities I cannot myself pronounce, for I had no opportunity, nor, may I add? had I any desire to examine it. One of the legislators informed me that the building of this fort had been one of the most gigantic swindles and disgraceful contract affairs in the history of the country. I am under the impression, although I did not breathe it at the time—for when among foreigners I always wish them to think that it is impossible for anything of that nature to occur among us—that

there are other countries besides the United States where fat jobs are allotted to popular contractors. I would wish it, however, to be distinctly remembered that England does not constitute the whole world, although to listen to many of her inhabitants one would imagine so.

After passing Fort Carrol, the sun went down in most gorgeous splendour, the unrippled water looked like a sea of molten silver, and the snow-white-sailed vessels slept calmly upon it, till the breezes should rise and summon them again to duty. Gradually the wooded margins grew more and more indistinct, with the sun's disappearance, but soon after a full moon, attended by thousands of stars, came out to keep watch over the night, while the good ship *Maggie*, going at the rate of fourteen or fifteen knots an hour, onward cleaved her way through the waters, leaving behind her a track of illuminated foam, so straight that, marvelling at the helmsman's skill, you look at it till it is lost in the distance.

Lighthouses are now seen to flash forth their

warning against dangers; and point out the course in which the ship must be steered to avoid them. But apparently disregarding all counsels, we rush onward, altering our course neither to the left nor to the right. But Miss *Maggie* is controlled by an experienced person, who, having spent a life in navigating these waters, can tell every bank, and shoal, and rock in the Chesapeake, from Baltimore to Capes Charles and Henry; and it must be a thick night, ay, and a wild one too, that would prevent him making his voyage.

Among other passengers on board were a number of unsuccessful office-seekers, who had been to Annapolis or Baltimore to push their claims upon the new governor for preferment to public positions. Their disappointments they took very badly; and if their words were to be relied upon, Governor White would stand but a small chance of being re-elected. In fact, as it got late, and more attention was paid to the—shall we say “smiling?”—I began to think that the governor must be a most ungrateful man, for but for the efforts of these very gen-

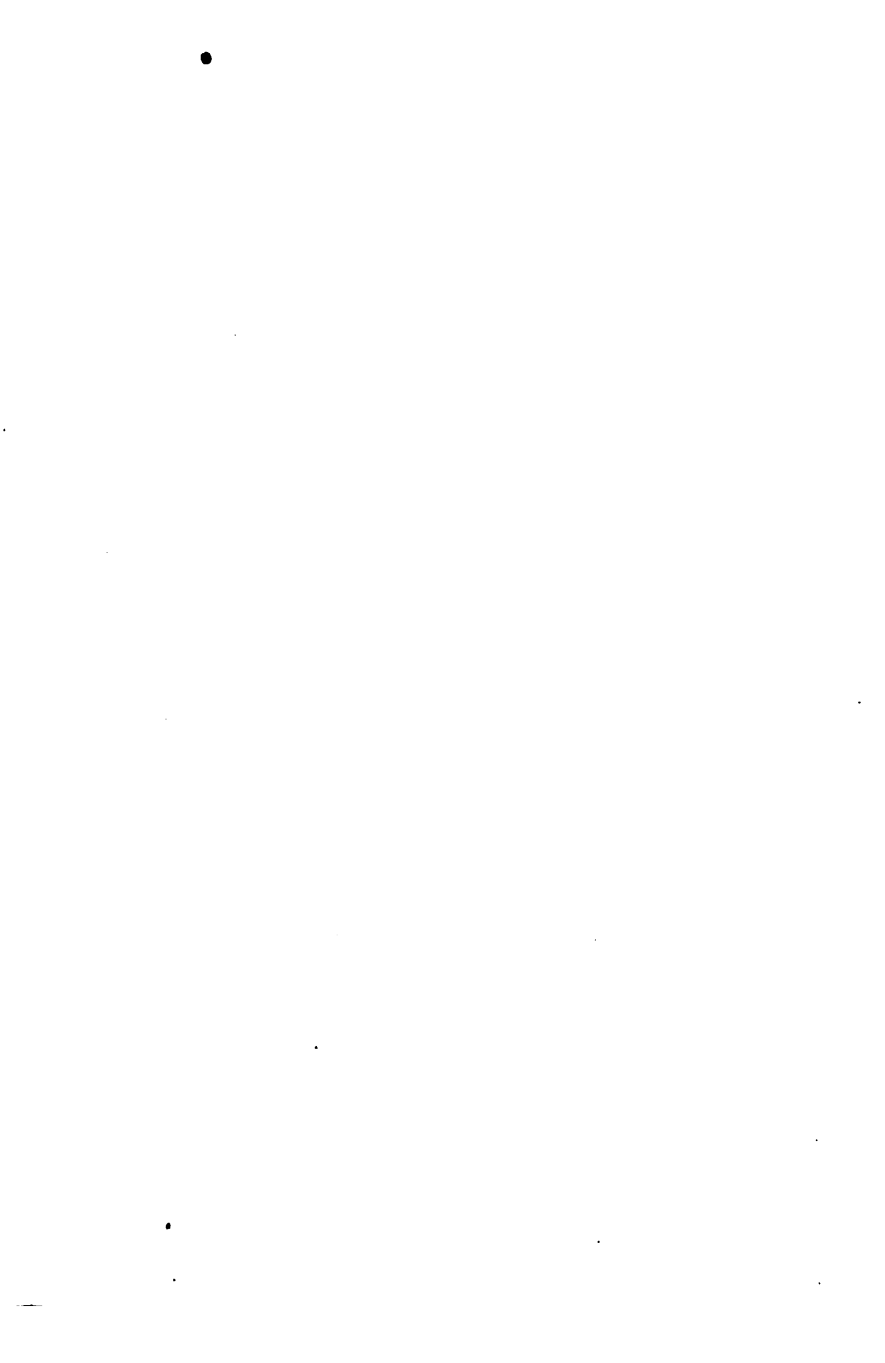
tlemen—their “entirely disinterested efforts, remember, sir,” repeated twice over one of my informants—“Stickney White would not now be Governor of Maryland.” Was it not shameful, then, that the Governor did not allow these men an opportunity of serving the state? Offices might have been created, without salaries, to please them—the bare acknowledgment of their services would have satisfied these self-sacrificing patriots, who had no desire to bow the knee to Mammon.

A few hours’ sleep, however, frequently occasions extraordinary changes in a person’s ideas, for in the morning I had grave doubts that the impressions of the former evening would require re-consideration. About half-past eight we adjourned for a game of eucré, and as no one rivaled the celebrated heathen Chinees, Ah-sing, luck was pretty evenly divided. But ours was not the only card-party going on. Poker was being patronized, I afterwards learned, in another part of the ship; and the most patriotic, influential, but unsuccessful of the place-hunters got cleaned out to such an

extent that he had to borrow the sinews of war to enable him to continue the remainder of his journey.

During that evening I booked eight invitations for indefinitely long visits, each of my prospective hosts promising me shooting, fishing, riding, and driving; and, strange to tell, I am certain each person was sincere, and really wished me to accept his proffered hospitality.

The steward awoke me in the morning with the information that we were at Crisfield. The row that was going on would have almost caused the uninitiated to imagine that he had been transported, during his dreams, to the spot where Jove forged his thunderbolts. But I soon learned the very natural cause of the turmoil. The *Maggie* having but a short time to remain, all freight for this port was being put ashore on barrows by a double gang of porters, who rushed to and fro as if their lives depended on their activity.



CHAPTER X.

OBLIGING OFFER—MARYLANDERS—A RAGGED BOATMAN—UP
THE SOUND IN STORMY WEATHER—A CHAPTER OF ACCI-
DENTS—A PURCHASE OF FOWLS—ABUNDANCE OF TAME
AND WILD FOWL—A HEAVY SEA—THE WOOLFORD—MONEY
WELL SPENT—THE PEOPLE OF DEVIL'S ISLAND—THE
BLUE BIRD—MIGRATION OF BIRDS—THE SONGSTER OF THE
GLADE—A SLOUGH OF DESPOND.



CHAPTER X.

IT was grey dawn when I reached the landing, still Crisfield was all bustle and confusion. I sought the hotel, which was open, and, early as was the hour, breakfast was on the table; but I could not eat, try as I would, although I knew a long journey was before me. However, to satisfy myself with the idea that I was doing the inward man justice, I played with a buck-wheat cake, and swallowed an indifferent cup of coffee, and then proceeded to search this interesting, but not attractive town, for a craft to take me to Devil's Island. My own idea was to charter a sloop of ten or fifteen tons for the purpose, but as the wind had risen, and was now blowing very stiff, almost half a

gale, I could find no one willing to undertake the task, although my offer went as high as twenty dollars for the service. Disgusted and disheartened, I feared I should be compelled to remain where I was till a change of weather took place, always to be regarded as an unsatisfactory, and frequently an indefinite task, when I met one of my fellow-travellers of the previous evening. To him I related my troubles, and his kindness was proved by the answer he made me.

“The train for Wilmington starts in half an hour; accompany me in it to Princess Anne, where I reside, and, after having a comfortable dinner, I will drive you over to Devil’s Island.”

My most grateful thanks were certainly due to this kind gentleman, who, to serve me, would have driven forty miles over diabolical roads, and passed a night from home. Possibly persons may think that I am too fulsome in my praise of Marylanders; what I narrate is true, and in what part of the world would anyone find these attentions exceeded?

However, I did not accept his offer, for as I was going to the ticket office of the railroad for my *coupon*, a tattered, dirty, half-clothed, half-fed-looking lad of eighteen or nineteen saluted me after this manner,

"Say, ain't you the chap that wants to go to Devil's Island?—for if you'll come down pretty smart, I'm game."

Not being desirous of buying a pig in a poke, I went to examine his craft, and found it to be a small canoe, in good repair, but too diminutive, I thought, for the purpose.

"You ain't scared, be you?" he said, as he observed in my countenance an expression which indicated a disinclination to accept his offer.

"No, I am not," I answered. "But don't you think that your canoe is too small to live outside in such weather?"

"No, I don't, or I wouldn't be here. Ain't my life as good as your'n, stranger? If you ain't skeared, you'll jist say right away whether you be game."

Ten dollars was the price agreed upon. So

the owner of the canoe and I parted, to meet again in a quarter of an hour. My friend was very much disappointed that I would not accompany him, and blamed me seriously for attempting to go up the sound in such weather in so small a boat; but I had made my bargain, and resolved to stick to it.

With my limited number of travelling traps—for the bulk of my things were at Devil's Island—I joined my boatman, when the allotted quarter of an hour was up.

From the fitfulness and uncertainty of the gusts of wind, we were a long time in getting clear of the harbour; but at length having gained an offing from the store-houses and docks, the breeze became steady. The main-sail was now set, and we commenced a beat to windward for about three miles. As the channel down which we had to go was narrow, probably not over half a mile wide, there was comparatively little or no sea. My boatman, I found, understood his work, and did it so methodically that I gained great confidence in his capacity to take me safely to my destination; and his manner, which

at first was anything but agreeable, improved much upon acquaintance.

However, he was, without exception, the most ragged and badly-dressed man I had ever seen in America; and, in as delicate a manner as I could devise—for these people are wonderfully sensitive—I tried to learn how he appeared to be in such destitute circumstances.

Looking me in the face at such moments as he dare remove his eyes from windward, he remained silent for a short interval, and then said:

“I’m in trouble, stranger. If it hadn’t been for that, I wouldn’t be taking you up the sound; if it warn’t that there’s another in the same fix, I wouldn’t be doing this job no-how.”

He stopped; but the expression of a little sympathy on my part soon induced him to tell me his troubles. Young as he was, he had a wife; their crop of sweet potatoes had failed, and early in the Winter his canoe got lost, so that, by two unforeseen events, this pair of children had been deprived of their means of

living. The canoe he was then in had been borrowed to come to Crisfield, for his home was in Virginia. When narrating this chapter of accidents, I heard something struggling in a box that was placed midships; curiosity induced me to ask what it was,

“Only a dozen fowls that the old woman” (here a common expression for a wife, whether young or old) “had left, and she agreed with me that I should take them to Crisfield, and sell them for what they would fetch; but they’re so poor, no one would have them, though I hawked them about the town all day yesterday.”

And I thought to myself, “Poor fellow! he has had nothing to eat; for doubtless on the money he expected for them he relied for yesterday’s meal.”

“Well, what will you take for them?”

“They were worth five dollars; but they have been wet since yesterday, and look terrible bad, so we’ll say three.”

Without looking at my purchases I paid over the five, feeling that I was truly doing an act

of charity; but the surprise expressed in the young fellow's face at obtaining more than the sum asked was so painful, yet so grateful, that I turned my head away; for, old soldier and wanderer as I am, I have not got sufficiently hardened to be able always to suppress a tear.

At length we reached the open water, and as our course was free, a trifle more sail was set, and we fairly flew, while the white broken waters raced after our stern, and threatened momentarily to roll in and swamp us. For over an hour I expected every moment would be our last; for, if the canoe had filled, she was so heavily ballasted that she must have gone down in an instant. Still I stuck to the sheet, and my companion to the tiller. Neither of us spoke; but I could see, from the young man's compressed lip and keen fixed eye, that he appreciated the danger, but would stand to his post as long as he was permitted to occupy it. Once, after a heavy sea which broke close upon us, he said, as if speaking to himself, "The old woman may be better without me!"

It is a silly—more, a culpable thing, to run yourself needlessly into danger. On this occasion my readers may think I was doing so; but the voyage was necessary, although I will not state the reason which rendered it imperative that I should reach Devil's Island that day, great as was the risk which I ran. We had shipped so much water that both of us were soaked; how could it be otherwise, for we were seated on the floor, which never was free from several inches of water, while the spray, clipped by the wind from the tips of the waves, kept deluging us with a heavy and unceasing shower.

Never did I see wild-fowl so abundant, never did I find them more tame than during this run from Crisfield to Devil's Island. They were all what is called here "coarse fowl," such as coots—generally designated on the Chesapeake "tar buckets"—loons, and such like. If our attention had not been otherwise engaged, many of these birds could have been knocked down with an oar; but, had they been canvas-backs, they would, on this occasion, have passed scathless.

At length a heavy sea, sufficient to quarter fill the canoe, tumbled into us. At my companion's orders, in a moment I threw overboard several blocks of stone which were employed as ballast, that might have together weighed a couple of hundred-weight; and, as the succeeding wave treated us more kindly than its predecessor, we, for the time, escaped immediate danger. However, I gave up the sheet to the helmsman, and took to the bailing-dish; and so energetically pursued my task that, in a quarter of an hour, we were comparatively free of water. The breeze soon after commenced to get gusty—an indication that it was breaking—and the next mile or two we were exposed to no more *contretemps*.

At length I could descry the tall but sparsely-foliaged pines that mark the situation of Devil's Island, and wishing to reach them as devoutly as ever storm-tossed mariner wished for day, we altered our course for them. But away to leeward appears a familiar sail, the cut of which, and the loftiness of the peak, were not to be mistaken, for it is the *Woolford*. Is this

kismet, or any other name for destiny, or chance, or luck, which may be chosen?—for it appears to me that I never get into difficulties by water, but that this pretty little craft comes to the rescue.

With the chopping sea that was running, it was no easy matter to get on board. Old yachtsmen and professional sailors know this; but, at length, I succeeded, and for the change I was thankful, forgetting, for the time, in gratitude for my relief, those calls upon me that required my immediate attention. However, I was brought to a sense of my neglect by seeing the proprietor of the canoe trying furtively to get the box containing the fowls on board the cutter. This scene recalled me to myself.

“Stop,” I exclaimed, “take them back, and give them to your old woman, with an Englishman’s compliments.”

He hesitated; and then, with more emphasis, I told him what I hope may be considered a white fib, for I feared that the independent spirit of the man would rebel against accepting a favour from a stranger.

"I find I have no use for them now, so take them back with you."

With an honest but crestfallen look, he drew out his greasy pocket-book, and produced the five-dollar bill I had given him for the poultry.

"No, keep it," I said, hesitating, till at length a happy thought struck me. "That extra sum is fairly earned, for I had no idea that we should have so rough a passage."

And, with pleasure on his face, he returned the note to its sanctuary. Before casting off the painter that held the canoe to the cutter he drew alongside, for he had a parting word to say to me.

"I never met a pure Britisher like you afore. So help me God, if they are all like you, if that big muss comes, which folks are talking about, darn me if I'll lift a hand in it!"

Soon after the staunch little canoe, with its ragged, starved-looking helmsman, was far away in the distance, and I enjoyed the pleasant reflection that, by the expenditure of five dollars, I knew I had made one heart lighter, for the time being. When a fellow-creature is

in sorrow, trouble, distress—for who has not known them?—who would not make a little sacrifice to alleviate the calamity by which he is bowed down? The trifle I spared, even if it caused me to drink less or smoke less until it was made up, relieved, I have no doubt, this poor wayfarer on the voyage of life, and saved him a few hours, or possibly days of anxiety, and was, therefore, as well-spent money as ever was laid out by its owner.

When put off the wind, the gallant cutter skimmed over the waves at racing pace, regardless of squalls and broken water, and soon ran into shelter under a friendly point, where I disembarked safely on *terra firma*, which I was not sorry again to stand upon. Here I found life much as usual; the troubles of the outside world not at all distressing the people; for, as long as fish and oysters are abundant, they have all that is necessary for their own use, and a valuable surplus to dispose of. All that is desirable cannot be obtained; but, if Devil's Island were not a barren exposed spit of land, but enjoyed those advantages which many a

tropical, uninhabited island possesses, with the other blessings which have fallen to her lot, it would be too richly favoured. The balance of nature and of power are frequently spoken of; Devil's Island, with all the wealth that its waters give it, fails in the very gifts that are widely awarded to others. But its people are satisfied, enjoy life in their own way, and, with the exception of the three or four foreigners who have crept into the community, crave for no other lot, for they know no better.

Although I had made up my mind not to visit the marsh again, the arrival from the south of several new species of migratory birds, which make such situations their home, induced me to alter my resolution, and make an exploring expedition into its labyrinths of water-courses, that I may learn something more of the habits of these new denizens.

Immediately after leaving the house, I saw a blue-bird, the first that had for some time come under my observation. The little beauty was seated on the topmost limb of a peach-tree, carolling forth his plaintive sweet song, as

if chanting a hymn of thanks for the successful termination to his long and dangerous migratory journey which had been vouchsafed to him. Although the weather was clear and bright, still it was very cold, and I am certain his delicate little body must suffer from the contrast of this temperature with the balmy air of the sunny south. Still there is no shivering about him, except when he shakes in his notes. What room there is for imagination to work here! If one will only try to follow the course of this songster since he left his Winter quarters, how numerous are the dangers he must have encountered.

Supposing some one of the numerous West-Indian islands to be the place from whence he came, then the palm and the orange-tree, the coffee-plant and the sugar-cane, would have been his previous resting-places; but the promptings of nature having incited him to migrate, the sea has to be traversed during what has probably been a long flight. Fair breezes may have blown at the time of departure, but who can guarantee that these will last

in a tropical climate? Ere half the journey is accomplished, a gale may arise, increasing possibly to a hurricane, and the light form of the little bird is either buffeted to and fro by it, or is precipitately borne before the blast at an almost electric velocity, with the waves lashed into fury, and running, in grand disorder and tumult, mountains high, beneath him—possibly vessels in dire distress, some on their beam-ends, others dismasted, or even water-logged, straining and struggling to remain longer on the surface of the all-engulphing deep, are passed. Possibly on the deck of some of these he might see men in every stage of despair—some seeking their God, whom till then they have forgotten; others reckless and profane, though soon their end is coming; or, worse than all, a brawling, drunken crew, preferring to breathe their last insensible to the sting of death.

But from such painful scenes let us flit with the little wanderer through the haze and spray and drift of water, until land breaks upon his vision—a sight which gives energy to his wearied pinions, till at length he finds a roosting-place.

tired and worn-out, upon the giant limb of some monarch of the forest. Possibly the haven gained is Florida, the land of flowers, and the tree he rests upon is an evergreen oak, grandest representative of all the vegetable kingdom that surrounds him, and whose great limbs and stem are destined at a future date to form the most important parts of a crack frigate or powerful line-of-battle ship. But the little blue bird, from his perch on the evergreen oak, can again witness new sights; for possibly it stands on the edge of a glade—perhaps on the margin of a lagoon. If the former be the case, the timid deer and wary wild turkey, seeking their food, will pass before him; if the latter, the swamp-loving alligators and turtles, reposing on their slimy beds of mud, will be his neighbours. But there are other frequenters of these regions, more pleasant companions—viz., the flamingoes and other lovely waders, the brilliant wood-duck and the beautiful mallard, the active kingfisher and the querulous blue jay, the industrious tanager and the scarlet grossbeak—for all these, and many more, seek

this neighbourhood for their Winter residence. But through forests of pine and swamp-wood, across lagoons almost hidden under their coating of decayed timber, over grassy glades and barrens of caporal, the little traveller pushes his course, till a country is reached where the soil is under cultivation, and man's dwellings dot the surface. Here, among the rice-fields, he tarries, and chants his hymns while listening to the hearty laugh or quaint melody of the negroes, or the baying of the deep-voiced hound. But, pleasant as this sunny land is, the wanderer's destination is further north, and as he pursues the course dictated by instinct, the sons of man become more numerous, and the wild, uncultivated lands less spacious, till he reaches a town where, on a magnolia, densely covered with its handsome green foliage, he finds a resting-place from which he can hear the hum of commerce, the noise of traffic, and the voices of children ; but these do not disturb him, for he knows that all welcome his arrival as the foreteller of Spring. Still his home is not even here. Through the Carolinas he pur-

sues his way, over field and river, swamp and hill-side; past barrens of stunted pine, till Virginia, with all its beauty and wealth of mountain, wood, and water, is reached. Here he might tarry—many of his race do so; but our little friend on the peach-tree is a child of Maryland, and must return to his native state, where he is right welcome, for a house is provided for him in the shape of a pretty little Gothic cottage, placed in a spot secure from intruders, which in a month hence will doubtlessly be occupied by his mate and their tiny progeny.

We all know the engaging familiarity of our own robin, and how fearlessly it associates with us. The blue-bird of America has all these attractions, with the advantage of a more beautiful plumage, for on the back he is an azure blue of the most delicate shade, relieved with black pencilling at the tips of the wings, a red, fawn-coloured bosom, and white stomach.

I have heard the point often disputed whether it or the robin were the sweetest songster. For myself I think that nothing can exceed our

English pet ; but the American bird is so little behind in powers of melody, with the advantage of giving forth its song more frequently, that it would be very difficult to say in whose favour a decision should be given.

Few residents of America do not erect a house in which it may reside, the poorer classes devoting a common box for the purpose ; but wealthier people sometimes go to considerable expense, and have a handsome residence for their pet, placed upon the top of a high pole. It is most interesting to watch how indefatigable are the attentions of the male to his mate while she is sitting. He commences to carol within sight of her, but in a moment something catches his eye, and off he darts, returning probably with a caterpillar, which, without delay, is taken to the partner. Again he commences his song, to be interrupted as before. In fact, the male never appears to eat, but gives all the insects he collects to the hen-bird. Their food consists almost entirely of insects, and thus they do an immensity of service to the farmer.

But leaving the little blue bird, and wishing him soon a good and affectionate wife, I get into the swamp, which might worthily be called the Slough of Despond, for once in it, every one will despair before he again gets out of it. An old turkey-buzzard hovers overhead, eyeing me with great distrust, still with a hankering liking, for I believe this bird is aware that through the medium of my gun I can procure him carrion. Still he is doubtful whether I may not turn it upon himself. One thing is certain, that these birds will watch you all day; and although I have never seen them attack a wounded bird, I should be sorry to see one placed within their power. They are gluttonous, cowardly creatures, badly and coarsely feathered, and so filthy that they smell like pole-cats. Still, they are immensely useful, for they devour all the carrion and garbage, which, if left, would be very efficacious in the production of disease.

Their powers of flight are very wonderful, for they will sail round and round in circles of an average diameter of two or three hundred

yards, with scarcely a perceptible motion of the wing; but this is even exceeded by the keenness of their vision, for however distant apart two of these birds are, if one by his movements indicates that he has found food, the other will proceed in a moment to share in the anticipated banquet. It was long supposed that they possessed great scenting powers, but this is erroneous; and the conclusion lately come to by able authorities is that to their keenness of vision alone can their power of detecting food be attributed.

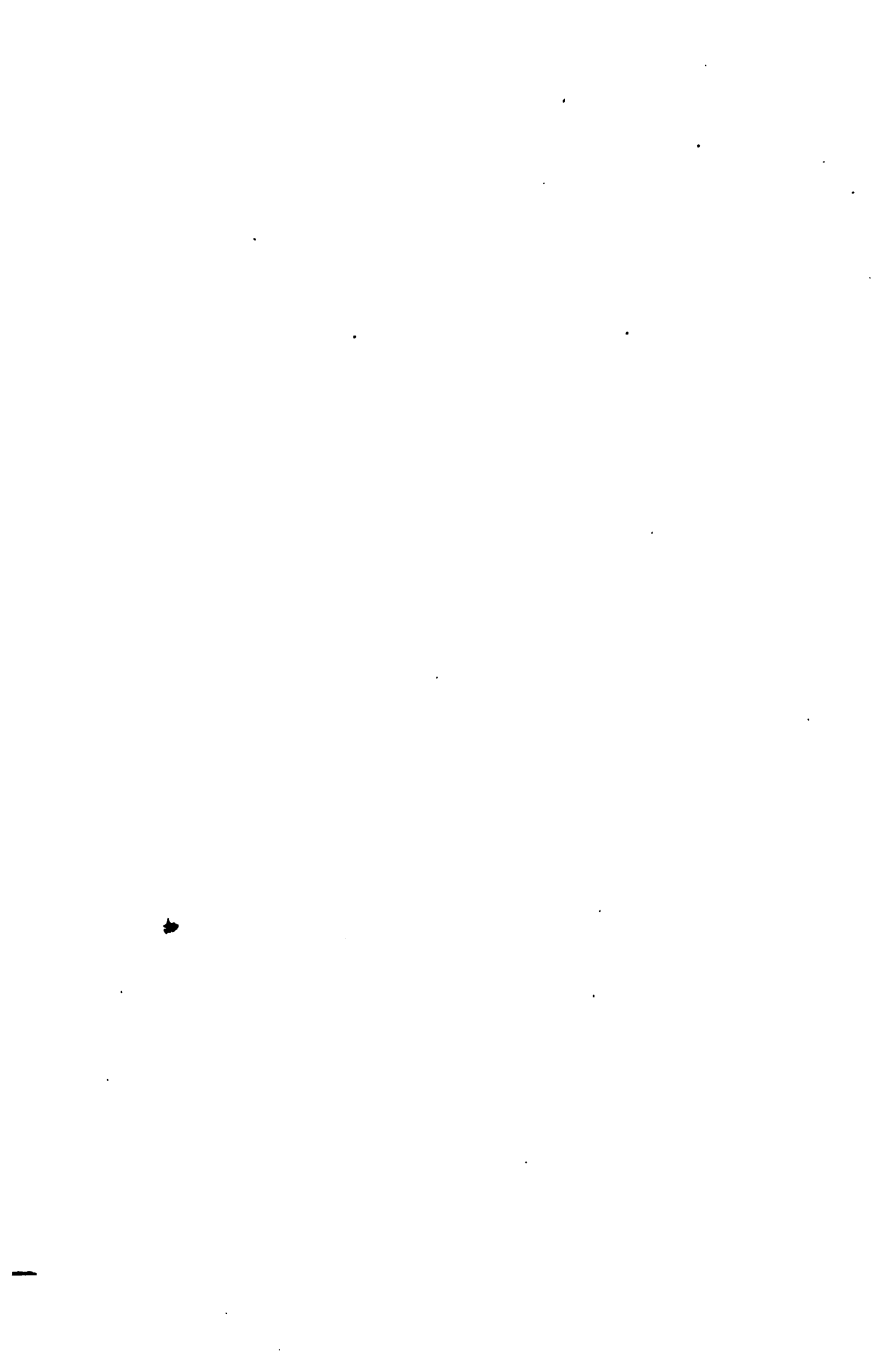
While on the margin of the open water whose banks I was following, my course was suddenly interrupted by a water-course, which I was considering how to get over, when a scarlet tanager flew into a clump of neighbouring cat-tail reeds. A month later such a circumstance would not have created wonder, but it did now, for the gaudy beauty was long in advance of the season at which he is due here. Poor little fellow! if he does not return south—and probably he has not strength to do so—

some cold morning his brilliant-coloured body will be found lying in the swamp.

For several hours I wandered through the marsh, but did not find the birds I sought for, which doubtless had proceeded further on their Northern journey; nor could I see any specimens of the numerous species of tortoises that I had hoped would now be commencing to show themselves. However, I procured one bird that an English sportsman would have considered a sufficient remuneration for a day's tramp—a wild goose; but, poor thing, it was a perfect bag of bones, and the reason why it was in this condition was apparent, for the tip of one wing bore an unmistakable evidence of its having lately been shot. If such had not been the case, it would doubtless have been with its companions, far to the north, where the surface of the open water was covered with floating ice.

CHAPTER XI.

FAREWELL TO DEVIL'S ISLAND—A FINE FARM—HAVRE-DE-GRACE—THE SUSQUEHANNAH FLATS—CANVAS-BACKS AND RED-HEAD DUCKS—PROTECTION TO MIGRATORY BIRDS—NEFARIOUS TRAFFIC—SNOWBALL—BALTIMORE RAILWAY STATION—BALLARD'S RESTAURANT—A SANCTUARY FOR BOOKWORM OR SPORTSMAN—THE LION ON NORTHUMBERLAND HOUSE.



CHAPTER XI.

THE wild-fowl, consequent on one or two warm, balmy days succeeding my visit to the marsh, are all departing for the north. Moreover, the season is getting late, and I require to be in England next month; so I finally make up my mind, and not without great regret, to bid good-bye to the numerous kind friends I have found among the primitive people of this out-of-the-way place, Devil's Island.

The day I left quite a crowd attended me to the beach, and although I could not promise with certainty ever to revisit them, still I told them I hoped to do so, my landlady exacting a promise from me, if I did not forget her when I got home, to send her the seeds of some English flowers.

Fair winds favoured me 'on my run to Crisfield, and that night I caught a boat for Baltimore, where I arrived the succeeding day. A gentleman owning property on the margin of the Susquehannah having asked me to visit him, and nearly two weeks having to elapse before I could sail for England, I accepted the invitation, and enjoyed the inspection of one of the nicest agricultural farms I have ever seen in America. Nearly all his stock are sprung from imported progenitors, and show, in shape and appearance, their aristocratic lineage. His kennel of setters and pointers are the admiration of all who know them, and are the envy of numerous brother sportsmen.

On my way back to Baltimore I stopped at Havre-de-Grace for some hours, waiting for the train which was telegraphed to be three hours behind time, thus affording me opportunity to see the lions of the vicinity.

A very wide and placid river, sheltered by banks, and covered with trees to its water's edge, the ground gradually rising in elevation as it recedes from the margin, yet never entitled

to the appellation of high land, never rugged or wild in its outline, well cultivated, and not likely to drive the landscape artist into ecstásy, is the Susquehannah at its junction with the Chesapeake. Yet I have seen this locality so brilliant in the colouring of its autumnal foliage, that no person who had not witnessed the original would fail to condemn an artist's representation of it as unnatural and exaggerated.

The traveller from Philadelphia to Baltimore by train crosses this noble river at a point where its beauties can well be admired, for on his right hand, like some large inland lake, stretches a view of the Susquehannah, and on the left is seen the Chesapeake Bay, its limits on three sides being marked by a distant fringe of trees.

On an airy-looking wooden bridge, in fact, too airy-looking to be, in my estimation, durable, supported by stone buttresses, passes the train, so elevated above the water's level that many a heart must have quailed ere now, when looking down from the car windows into the immense abyss below. On the southern side

of the river is situated the village of Havre-de-Grace. From the name I should imagine that a Frenchman first settled here, and established his household gods. If it had been an Englishman, he probably would have called it Haven of Grace, for, search where you will, no better sobriquet for this spot can be found. Of course, like every place in America, its size has increased, and doubtless is increasing, but there is over it an air of rest and repose seldom to be found about the residences of man on the western side of the Atlantic.

Distant about four miles from Havre-de-Grace down the Chesapeake bay, are situated the wonderful Susquehannah flats, which cover an area of about sixteen square miles, over which flows an average of six feet of water. Here grows in the utmost profusion the wild celery, *valisineria aquatica*, so attractive to wild-fowl, particularly canvas-back and red-head ducks; so that in favourable seasons the waters of this locality are actually covered with them in uncountable numbers. But a welcome of peace is not extended to the poor exhausted travellers

on their arrival here, for many of the inhabitants live by their slaughter, and almost fabulous sums of money are annually made by the wild-fowl shooters. Nor is this so surprising when I state that over one hundred birds have been killed in a single day by one gunner, and that canvas-backs are worth from six to eight dollars a pair in the New York and Philadelphia markets.

Thus the Susquehannah flats are not solely resorted to by the residents of Havre-de-Grace, but strangers from other states arrive here in immense numbers to participate in the wild-fowl harvests, the results of which is, that soon these magnificent birds will become extinct, or be driven off to seek other homes.

The late governor of the state of Maryland was instrumental in having laws passed for the protection of their game, but his turn of office having expired, it is much to be feared that they will become a dead letter under the administrations of his successors. If I was a Marylander and had the power, I would keep the Susquehannah flats as a state preserve, grant-

ing without partiality, favour, or affection, only a limited number of days a week for shooting, and then only to such as paid for a licence, at the same time forbidding the use of larger guns than ordinary fowling-pieces, and all wholesale engines of slaughter to be entirely tabooed. As with this feeding-ground of the canvas-back duck, so let it be with our salmon rivers—do away with such implements as are used by those who would make a livelihood out of the game they capture, for they are ruining irrevocably what is a source of amusement to the respectable and industrious, at the same time gaining a subsistence out of that which Providence intended for man's use, not for his abuse. If Governor Bowie had retained office for another term, there is little doubt that he would have carried on the good work he commenced; but this is one of the troubles of Republican Governments, that the terms of power are too limited to effect radical cures. Governor White is doubtless a high-toned gentleman, and most honourable man; at the same time he may have no tastes for the pursuits of his predeces-

sor, or he may possibly aim at higher distinctions than a state can confer on one who merely affords protection to migratory birds.

Another reason, and I believe a stronger one too, why these wild-fowl should annually diminish, is to be laid at our door, or, what is almost the same thing, at that of Canada. The majority of the migratory ducks that frequent the coast of America in Winter, breed in the high latitudes of Newfoundland and Labrador. A number of disreputable persons from Nova Scotia, Prince Edward's Island, New Brunswick, and Yankee-land know this, and yearly send up vessels to load with the eggs of these valuable birds; and not satisfied with taking only those that are fresh, they wantonly break the eggs about to hatch, and ruthlessly slaughter the mothers, who prefer becoming victims to deserting their embryo progeny. Only fancy how many eggs it must take to load a hundred ton schooner!—and when I state that there are dozens of such vessels engaged in this nefarious traffic, can it be a matter of surprise that indications of the extinction of the race are year by year be-

coming more apparent? Can the government of the Dominion of Canada be aware of such malpractices, and still permit them to be carried on? In my humble opinion, if Maryland is to blame in not more efficiently protecting her wild-fowl, Canada is doubly culpable in permitting egging—for so it is called—to be practised upon her shores; for the former utilizes the bird when it is of a mature age, and in the best condition, the other when it is quite the reverse. Does the Atlantic so far sever the parent from the infant country as to prevent the latter from becoming aware that the former has taken even the sea-fowl under her care? Why, then, when we profess to be subjects of the same sovereign, and respecters alike of the same institutions and laws, can she not follow in so worthy a path as has been set her by the motherland? I write not in the interest of one, but in that of both; and the day is not far distant, if this be not attended to, when each will have to regret her culpable negligence.

As I stood upon a point of land that is situated at the junction of the noble Susquehannah

with the Chesapeake, and from which I could command a view over the extensive flats, thinking on what has been and is to come, I was joined by an old grey-haired nigger, who hovered round about me, evidently anxious to attract my attention and enter into conversation, yet too diffident to force his society upon me unless I evinced a desire for it. There was an air about the poor old man that spoke of better times, and, having great sympathy for those who have been reduced through force of circumstances, I waited for a moment till I caught his eye, when I beckoned him to me. Nervously he approached. A timid, half-frightened smile was on his face; his hands and legs appeared to be in his way; but at length, when, after some awkward movements, he had come sufficiently close, he touched his cap and saluted me with,

“Good morning, sar.”

“Well, Snowball, what do you want?”

This appellation is one very commonly given to a white-headed darky.

“By gollah! massa, who tell you my name?”

Not that it 'strordinary—all the folks about here know old Snowball." And the poor old fellow grinned all over his face.

"Yes," I replied, "you are doubtless a well-known character. But what do you wish to say to me?"

"This, sar. I hear that you Englishman come here to shoot; want servant. Now, I just suit you—understand dog first-class, make him down charge, and teach him to retrieve."

"But I have no dogs at present."

"The more reason you take me, for I most as good as dog. I know where partridge go. Suppose you come with me, I show you plenty bird, and find them too after you shoot. Come, massa, you see I most as good as dog."

So, having nothing to do, and being rather desirous of having a look at the country in the vicinity, and not disliking the old fellow's society, I followed him along a road, across several fields, and when we came to the edge of a stubble where it margined on some thick brush, old Snowball whispered, "Plenty bird here.

Look out, sar!" and in another moment flushed a covey, followed in a few minutes after by a second.

The old fellow looked at me with a grin of satisfaction all over his sable countenance. At length, however, the smile gradually died away, and was followed by a serious look, as if he wished to recollect something, which a bank of forgetfulness shut out from his memory. He resorted to that unfailing and ever-popular means of recalling it—namely, scratching his head; but the result was not so rapid as usual, and his scalp suffered in proportion to the delay.

At length the smile returned, deepening to a broad grin, till his mouth extended from ear to ear, and the white of his eyes, and his coffee-coloured old tusks, became the most distinguishable portions of his physiognomy. Then, bursting into a laugh, he exclaimed,

"I know you, massa! I see you before. You be in Baltimore eight or nine year ago. Ah! ha! you not remember me! Well, I never!" And the old man almost danced with pleasure.

I had an idea in my head that this sable son of man was cracked; but that I had been in Baltimore about the time he specified was true, so I asked him where we had met. And I found his statement was true, for he had been servant of a friend with whom I shot, and invariably accompanied his master in the field, to carry the bag and hunt the dogs.

On our way back to town he insisted I should come with him to his cabin. This I did, and while conversing with his old, withered, rheumatic better-half, Mr. Snowball was turning out drawer after drawer, evidently intently searching for some treasure. At length success rewarded his efforts, for he placed in my hands a German silver dog-whistle, on which my initials were scratched. I could well remember being its possessor, also having given it to my friend's faithful and devoted old servant. Poor fellow! the sunset of his life is not far distant, but I fear it will not be a bright one, but obscured by the clouds of poverty and want.

The distance from Havre-de-Grace to Baltimore is traversed in little more than an hour;

and long before you enter the business capital of Maryland, you find yourself going through interminable streets, edged on both sides with lumber-yards, oyster-packing houses, Irishmen's shanties, and German lager-beer saloons. No railings guard the track from other traffic; dirty children, and flat-sided, half-starved-looking pigs run heedlessly about the streets; while waggons and buggies, in the most admirable confusion, ply heedlessly to and fro. How accidents are avoided is to the stranger a matter of wonder; but they seldom happen. To the familiarity that is engendered by association, accompanied by the constant deep sonorous bellowing of the engine, assisted in its efforts to make a row by a very unmelodious bell, which is constantly kept going, this doubtless must be attributed.

At length the railroad station is reached—a very unworthy one, by the way, for so wealthy a city—and scarcely has the train ceased motion, when its living freight is discharged. Every passenger seems in a hurry—many so much so that an eye-witness might imagine

that life and death depended upon their celerity. Such, however, is not the case—it is only the peculiar characteristic of this go-ahead, never-idle, business-loving, 'money-making, indomitable people.

Not having had for a couple of days what is frequently called in America "a good square meal," I tumbled into a hack and drove to Ballard's Restaurant; for there I knew I could obtain all the delicacies of the season admirably cooked, a bottle of Rhine wine, that would not discredit the best cellar in Europe, a private room to enjoy all in, with good, quiet waiters to attend on me, and a further desideratum often to be considered—viz., charges remarkable for their moderation. This house has been a favourite haunt of mine, and if I return to Baltimore, and it remains in the hands of the same manager, will be again. The proprietor, whose name it bears, comes from the eastern shore of Maryland, and being a sportsman, and frequently visited by his acquaintances from that locality, can always give reliable information in reference to the pros-

pects of sport at any place, or where the wild-fowl are at the time to be found in the greatest abundance. Moreover, he can furnish introductions to his friends, who are innumerable—almost as weight-carrying as letters of credit endorsed by the most reliable banker.

As I have accepted Mr. Ballard's hospitality, and he mine, I hope that again we shall be able to repeat to each other these kind offices, for he is an excellent good-hearted fellow, although "he does know how to run an hotel."

For the two days succeeding my last experiences, it rained incessantly—a certain indication at this season of the year that Spring is near. Not having any facilities for in-door pursuits, time hung rather heavily upon my hands, and I was longing for a break in the weather, when it cleared up about sunset. Although I had killed a considerable number of snipes some weeks previously, these were only stragglers, too lazy to migrate with the main army of their species, or more hardy fellows, who disregarded frost and snow, or reckless, gambling birds, that liked the excitement of

running the risk of being frozen in or out, as the case might be. But the late change of wind and damp weather I knew would bring back the migratory hosts; and, as with shooting quail in the Mediterranean, if I could only catch the new arrivals on their advent, a wonderful day's sport might be enjoyed.

Full of this idea, I lounged up to one of the clubs, to find a gentleman who loved shooting as much as myself, and, moreover, an excellent sportsman. But it is very provoking—it is seldom you can find whom you seek for, so I waited, and read first one paper, then another, and read and waited, till at length the hour for going home came, and I reached the hall, to put on my great-coat, when the hall-door opened, and, as luck would have it, in came the object of my search, accompanied by a person whom I believed I had never seen before. My departure was therefore postponed, and the supper-room was chosen as a suitable place to gratify our wants, for there is a great attraction about a late meal, particularly if unexpected. This was followed by cigars and brandy-and-

water—how many of each it would be difficult to state, till at length pity on the sleepy, yawning darky waiters induced us to adjourn, with the understanding that my friend should call for me in the morning in time to catch an early train, for we had agreed to devote the morrow to the pursuit of long-bills.

My way home lay in the same direction as that of my friend's acquaintance, so we started together. At Charles Street, however, our routes separated—one turning to the right, another to the left. Well, this is not extraordinary; nor is it remarkable that he should propose seeing me part of the way home, more particularly as I was a stranger. So we walked almost to my hotel. This was so considerate of him that, when he asked me to see him a little bit of the way back, I consented; and so many little bits did I go at his repeated persuasion, that ultimately we stood in front of his residence.

"Well, good night, old fellow," I said. "I have to be up early; and if I do not get to roost, I shall be unable to shoot to-morrow."

"Now, don't go that way," he replied.

"Don't let it be said that you have stood at midnight" (it was at least two A.M. ; but I suppose the expression was used to make us both believe that it was not as late as we knew it to be) "in front of a Maryland gentleman's house without accepting some proof of his hospitality."

"I would not for the world disturb your family at this hour."

"Not the slightest necessity, for I have a latch-key." And in a moment the door was opened.

On entering, I found myself in such a sanctuary as would have gained the heart of the greatest book-worm and the best sportsman. Books of plates representing every scene from hog-sticking to snipe-shooting; landscapes of scenes in China and Arctic America; pipes that had been smoked by Chinese mandarins and Turkish pashas; Horaces, Virgils, Shakespeares, and Isaac Waltons—all were to be found within its limits. But while wondering where such a collection could be obtained from, my host returned with a decanter of Madeira, which I

am certain had changed its nationality nearly half a century since. Well, we finished that bottle; for it would have been a sin to have left any in the decanter. However, I refused steadfastly to top it off with some old whisky, which I felt certain was worthy of having been companion, although in a cellar, to the first-mentioned aristocrat among wines. Well, after some time he said to me, laughing,

“You don’t remember me yet?”

“Well, no,” I replied, “yet your face is familiar.”

In a few words he recalled a disturbance into which I had thoughtlessly got myself, through espousing the part of a man who I thought was being unjustly and unfairly handled, and out of which I would not have escaped but for his timely support. In strange lands, and when knocking about, people have quite enough to do to look after their own affairs, without quixotishly embroiling themselves in other people’s. So we had a parting glass, which made me so disinclined to rise early on the morrow, that the snipe shooting was postponed *sine die*.

In preference to going to New York to take ship for home, I took passage by the German Lloyd steam-ship *Berlin* for Southampton. The vessels of this line, which sail regularly twice a month, touch there on their route to Bremen Haven. A more comfortable or better handled vessel I never was on board of, and with the exception of one or two squally days, we were favoured with most propitious weather. It was with regret I parted with my fellow-passengers. Though few, they were a most jovial lot of people—all of German extraction, but Americans by adopted citizenship. Even my comfortable room and bed at Radley's did not prevent my wishing I could have continued the voyage to Bremen.

From Southampton to Waterloo is only a few hours, and when I reached that station, as on many a former occasion, I said to the cabby, "Drive to Northumberland House;" but when the grim lion with the remarkable tail had been reached, my order was changed to Northnumberland Hotel, Northumberland Street; and as I greeted the landlord and asked after old friends,

I cautioned the boots on the treatment of my gun-case, for Mr. Dougall had truly supplied me with the very best double-barrel that ever I pitched to my shoulder.

THE END

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